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OF
A

William Wordsworth,
after W. Shuter

Printed by Wittmann Paris

THE POETICAL WORKS

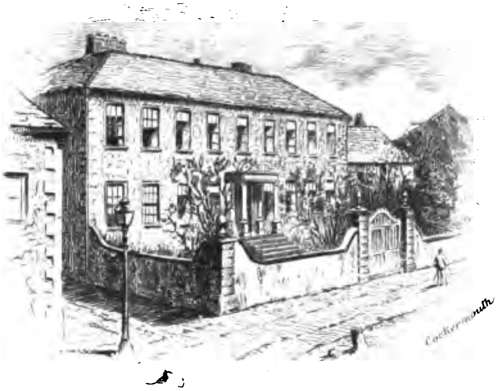
OF

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

EDITED BY

WILLIAM KNIGHT

VOL. I



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1896

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TO

STUDENTS OF WORDSWORTH

THESE VOLUMES

ARE

DEDICATED

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Extract from the Conclusion of a Poem, composed in Anticipation of leaving School	1
Written in very Early Youth	3
An Evening Walk	4
Lines written while Sailing in a Boat at Evening . .	32
Remembrance of Collins	33
Descriptive Sketches taken during a Pedestrian Tour among the Alps	35
Guilt and Sorrow; or, Incidents upon Salisbury Plain .	77
Lines left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree, which stands near the lake of Esthwaite, on a desolate part of the shore, commanding a beautiful prospect	108
The Borderers	112
The Reverie of Poor Susan	226

1798

A Night Piece	227
We are Seven	228
Anecdote for Fathers	234

	PAGE
"A whirl-blast from behind the hill"	238
The Thorn	239
Goody Blake and Harry Gill	253
Her Eyes are Wild	258
Simon Lee, the Old Huntsman	262
Lines written in Early Spring	268
To my Sister	270
Expostulation and Reply	272
The Tables Turned	274
The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman	275
The Last of the Flock	279
The Idiot Boy	283
The Old Cumberland Beggar	299
Animal Tranquillity and Decay	307
Appendix I	309
II	332
III	333
IV	333
V	334
VI	334
VII	336
VIII	337

PREFACE

DURING the decade between 1879 and 1889 I was engaged in a detailed study of Wordsworth; and, amongst other things, edited a library edition of his Poetical Works in eight volumes, including the "Prefaces" and "Appendices" to his Poems, and a few others of his Prose Works, such as his *Description of the Scenery of the Lakes in the North of England.* This edition was published by Mr. Paterson, Edinburgh, at intervals between the years 1882 and 1886: and it was followed in 1889 by a *Life of Wordsworth,* in three volumes, which was a continuation of the previous eight.

The present edition is not a reproduction of those eleven volumes of 1882-9. It is true that to much of the editorial material included in the latter—as well as in my *Memorials of Coleorton,* and in *The English Lake District as interpreted in the Poems of Wordsworth*—I can add little that is new; but the whole of what was included in these books has been revised, corrected, and readjusted in this one.[1] *Errata* in the previous volumes are corrected:

[1] In addition to my own detection of errors in the text and notes to the editions 1882-9, I acknowledge special obligation to the late Vice-Chancellor of the Victoria University, Principal Greenwood, who went over every volume with laborious care, and sent me the result. To the late Mr. J. Dykes Campbell, to Mr. J. R. Tutin, to the Rev. Thomas Hutchinson of Kimbolton, and to many others, I am similarly indebted.

several thousand new notes have been added, many of the old ones are entirely recast: the changes of text, introduced by Wordsworth into the successive editions of his Poems, have all been revised; new readings — derived from many MS. sources —have been added: while the chronological order of the Poems has, in several instances, been changed, in the light of fresh evidence.

The distinctive features of my edition of 1882-6 were stated in the Preface to its first volume. So far as these features remain in the present edition, they may be repeated as follows:—

First, the Poems are arranged in chronological order of composition, not of publication. In all the collective editions issued by Wordsworth during his lifetime, the arrangement of his poems in artificial groups, based on their leading characteristics — a plan first adopted in 1815—was adhered to; although he not unfrequently transferred a poem from one group to another. Here they are printed, with one or two exceptions to be afterwards explained, in the order in which they were written.

Second, the changes of text made by Wordsworth in the successive editions of his Poems, are given in footnotes, with the dates of the changes.

Third, suggested changes, written by the Poet on a copy of the stereotyped edition of 1836-7—long kept at Rydal Mount, and bought, after Mrs. Wordsworth's death, at the sale of a portion of the Library at the Mount—are given in footnotes.

Fourth, the Notes dictated by Wordsworth to Miss Isabella Fenwick—a dear friend of the Rydal Mount household, and a woman of remarkable character and faculty—which tell the story of his Poems, and the circumstances under which each was written, are printed in full.

Fifth, Topographical Notes—explanatory of allusions

made by Wordsworth to localities in the Lake District of England, to places in Scotland, Somersetshire, Yorkshire, the Isle of Man, and others on the Continent of Europe—are given, either at the close of the Poem in which the allusions occur, or as footnotes to the passages they illustrate.

Sixth, several complete Poems, and other fragments of verse, not included in any edition of his Works published during Wordsworth's lifetime, or since, are printed as an appendix to Volume VIII.

Seventh, a new Bibliography of the Poems and Prose Works, and of the several editions issued in England and America, from 1793 to 1850, is added.

Eighth, a new Life of the Poet is given.

These features of the edition of 1882-6 are preserved in that of 1896, and the following are added:—

First, The volumes are published, not in library 8vo size, but—as the works of every poet should be issued—in one more convenient to handle, and to carry. Eight volumes are devoted to the Poetical Works, and among them are included those fragments by his sister Dorothy, and others, which Wordsworth published in his lifetime among his own Poems. They are printed in the chronological order of composition, so far as that is known.

Second, In the case of each Poem, any Note written by Wordsworth himself, as explanatory of it, comes first, and has the initials W. W., with the date of its first insertion placed after it. Next follows the Fenwick Note, within square brackets, thus [ ], and signed I. F.; and, afterwards, any editorial note required. When, however, Wordsworth's own notes were placed at the end of the Poems, or at the foot of the page, his plan is adopted, and the date appended.

I should have been glad, had it been possible—the editors of the twentieth century may note this—to print Wordsworth's own notes, the Fenwick notes, and the Editor's in different type, and in type of a decreasing size; but the idea occurred to me too late, *i.e.* after the first volume had been passed for press.

Third, All the Prose Works of Wordsworth are given in full, and follow the Poems, in two volumes. The Prose Works were collected by Dr. Grosart, and published in 1876. Extracts from them have since been edited by myself and others: but they will now be issued, like the Poems, in chronological order, under their own titles, and with such notes as seem desirable.

Fourth, All the Journals written by Dorothy Wordsworth at Alfoxden, Dove Cottage, and elsewhere, as well as her record of Tours with her brother in Scotland, on the Continent, etc., are published—some of them in full, others only in part. An explanation of why any Journal is curtailed will be found in the editorial note preceding it. Much new material will be found in these Journals.

Fifth, The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth—with a few from Mary and Dora Wordsworth—are arranged chronologically, and published by themselves. Hitherto, these letters have been scattered in many quarters—in the late Bishop of Lincoln's *Memoirs* of his uncle, in *The Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson*, in the *Memorials of Coleorton* and my own *Life* of the Poet, in the *Prose Works*, in the *Transactions of the Wordsworth Society*, in the *Letters of Charles Lamb*, in the *Memorials of Thomas De Quincey*, and other volumes; but many more, both of Wordsworth's and his sister's, have never before seen the light. More than a hundred

and fifty letters from Dorothy Wordsworth to Mrs. Clarkson, the wife of the great "slave-liberator," were sent to me some time ago by Mrs. Arthur Tennyson, a relative of Mrs. Clarkson; and I have recently seen and been allowed to copy, Wordsworth's letters to his early friend Francis Wrangham, through the kindness of their late owner, Mr. Mackay of The Grange, Trowbridge. Many other letters of great interest have recently reached me.

Sixth, In addition to a new Bibliography, and a Chronological Table of the Poems, and the Prose Works, a Bibliography of Wordsworth Criticism is appended. It includes most of the articles on the Poet, and notices of his Works, which have appeared in Great Britain, America, and the Continent of Europe. Under this head I have specially to thank Mrs. Henry A. St. John of Ithaca, N.Y., a devoted Transatlantic Wordsworthian, who has perhaps done more than any one—since Henry Reed—to promote the study of her favourite poet in America: Mrs. St. John's Wordsworth collection is unique, and her knowledge and enthusiasm are as great as her industry has been. Professor E. Legouis of the University of Lyons—who wrote an interesting book on Wordsworth's friend, *Le Général Michel Beaupuy* (1891)—has sent me material from France, which will be found in its proper place. Frau Professor Gothein of Bonn, who has translated many of Wordsworth's poems into German, and written his life, *William Wordsworth: sein Leben, seine Werke, seine Zeitgenossen*, (1893), has similarly helped me in reference to German criticism.

Seventh, As the Poet's Letters, and his sister's Journals, will appear in earlier volumes, the new *Life of Wordsworth* will be much shorter than that

which was published in 1889, in three volumes 8vo. It will not exceed a single volume.

Eighth, In the edition of 1882-6, each volume contained an etching of a locality associated with Wordsworth. The drawings were made by John M'Whirter, R.A., in water-colour; and they were afterwards etched by Mr. C. O. Murray. One portrait by Haydon was prefixed to the first volume of the *Life*. In each volume of this edition—Poems, Prose Works, Journals, Letters, and Life—there will be a new portrait, either of the poet, or his wife, or sister, or daughter; and also a small vignette of a place associated with, or memorialised by Wordsworth in some way. The following will be the arrangement.

THE POEMS.

Vol.	Portraits.			Vignettes.
I.	W. Wordsworth,		by W. Shuter.	Cockermouth.
II.	,,	,,	by Robert Hancock.	Dame Tyson's Cottage, Hawkshead.
III.	,,	,,	by Edward Nash.	Room in St. John's College, Cambridge.
IV.	,,	,,	by Richard Carruthers.	Racedown, Dorsetshire.
V.	,,	,,	by William Boxall.	Alfoxden, Somersetshire.
VI.	,,	,,	by Henry William Pickersgill.	Goslar.
VII.	,,	,,	by Margaret Gillies.	Dove Cottage.
VIII.	,,	,,	by Benjamin R. Haydon.	The Rock of Names, Thirlmere.

THE PROSE WORKS.

IX.	,,	,,	by Henry Inman.	Gallow Hill, Yorkshire.
X.	,,	,,	by Margaret Gillies.	Coleorton Hall, Leicestershire.

THE JOURNALS.

XI.	Dorothy Wordsworth, (Artist unknown).	Allan Bank, Grasmere.
XII.	Mary Wordsworth, by Margaret Gillies.	Rydal Mount.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Vol.	Portraits.			Vignettes.
XIII.	Dora Wordsworth,		by Margaret Gillies.	Bolton Abbey.
XIV.	W. Wordsworth,		by Edward C. Wyon.	Blea Tarn.
XV.	,,	,,	by Thomas Woolner.	Peele Castle.

THE LIFE.

XVI.	,,	,,	by Frederick Thrupp.	Grasmere Church and Churchyard.
	,,	,,	by Samuel Laurence.	
	,,	,,	by Benjamin R. Haydon.	

All the etchings will be prepared by H. Manesse. The portraits, with many others, will be described in detail in a subsequent volume.

In all editorial notes the titles given by Wordsworth to his Poems are invariably printed in italics, not with inverted commas before and after, as Wordsworth himself so often printed them: and when he gave no title to a poem, its first line will be invariably placed within inverted commas. This plan of using Italics, and not Roman letters, applies also to the title of any book referred to by Wordsworth, or by his sister in her Journals. Whether they put the title in italics, or within commas, it is always italicised in this edition.

A subsidiary matter such as this becomes important when one finds that many editors of parts of the Works of Wordsworth, or of Selections from them, have invented titles of their own; and have sent their volumes to press without the slightest indication to their readers that the titles were not Wordsworth's; mixing up their own notion of what best described the contents of the Poem, or the Letter, with those of the writer. Some have suppressed Wordsworth's, and put their own title in its place! others have contented themselves (more

modestly) with inventing a title when Wordsworth gave none. I do not object to these titles in themselves. Several, such as those by Archbishop Trench, are suggestive and valuable. What I object to is that any editor—no matter who—should mingle his own titles with those of the Poet, and give no indication to the reader as to which is which. Dr. Grosart has been so devoted a student of Wordsworth, and we owe him so much, that one regrets to find in "The Prose Works of Wordsworth" (1876) the following title given to his letter to the Bishop of Llandaff, *Apology for the French Revolution.* It is interesting to know that Dr. Grosart thought this a useful description of the letter: but a clear indication should have been given that it was not Wordsworth's. It is true that, in the general preface to his volumes, Dr. Grosart takes upon himself the responsibility for this title; but it should not have been printed as the title in chief, or as the headline to the text. Similarly, with the titles of the second and third of the three *Essays on Epitaphs.*

As students of Wordsworth know, he issued a volume in 1838 containing all his sonnets then written; and, at the close of that edition, he added, "The six Sonnets annexed were composed as this Volume was going through the Press, but too late for insertion in the class of miscellaneous ones to which they belong." In 1884, Archbishop Trench edited the sonnets, with an admirable introductory "Essay on the History of the English Sonnet"; but, while Wordsworth gave no title to the 3rd and the 4th of the six, "composed as the Volume was going through the Press,"—either in his edition of 1838, *or in any subsequent issue* of his Poems—his editor did so. He gave what are really excellent titles, but

he does not tell us that they are his own! He calls them respectively *The Thrush at Twilight*, and *The Thrush at Dawn.* Possibly Wordsworth would have approved of both of those titles: but, that they are not his, should have been indicated.

I do not think it wise, from an editorial point of view, even to print in a "Chronological Table"—as Professor Dowden has done, in his admirable Aldine edition—titles which were not Wordsworth's, without some indication to that effect. But, in the case of Selections from Wordsworth—such as those of Mr. Hawes Turner, and Mr. A. J. Symington,—every one must feel that the editor should have informed his readers *when* the title was Wordsworth's, and *when* it was his own coinage. In the case of a much greater man—and one of Wordsworth's most illustrious successors in the great hierarchy of English poesy, Matthew Arnold—it may be asked why should he have put *Margaret, or the Ruined Cottage*, as the title of a poem written in 1795-7, when Wordsworth never once published it under that name? It was an extract from the first book of *The Excursion*—written, it is true, in these early years,—but only issued as part of the latter poem, first published in 1814.

The question of the number, the character, and the length of the Notes, which a wise editor should append to the works of a great poet, (or to any classic), is perhaps still *sub judice.* My own opinion is that, in all editorial work, the notes should be illustrative rather than critical; and that they should only bring out those points, which the ordinary reader of the text would not readily understand, if the poems were not annotated. For this reason, topographical, historical, and antiquarian notes are almost essential. The Notes which Wordsworth

himself wrote to his Poems, are of unequal length and merit. It was perhaps necessary for him to write—at all events it is easy to understand, and to sympathise with, his writing—the long note on the revered parson of the Duddon Valley, the Rev. Robert Walker, who will be remembered for many generations as the "Wonderful Walker." The Poet's editors have also been occasionally led to add digressive notes, to clear up points which had been left by himself either dubious, or obscure. I must plead guilty to the charge of doing so: *e.g.* the identification of "The Muccawiss" (see *The Excursion*, book iii. l. 953) with the Whip-poor-Will involved a great deal of laborious correspondence years ago. It was a question of real difficulty; and, although the result reached could now be put into two or three lines, I have thought it desirable that the opinions of those who wrote about it, and helped toward the solution, should be recorded. What I print is only a small part of the correspondence that took place.

On the other hand, it would be quite out of place, in a note to the famous passage in the 4th book of *The Excursion*, beginning

> . . . . I have seen
> A curious child applying to his ear

to enter on a discussion as to the extent of Wordsworth's debt—if any—to the author of *Gebir*. It is quite sufficient to print the relative passage from Landor's poem at the foot of the page.

All the Notes written by Wordsworth himself in his numerous editions will be found in this one, with the date of their first appearance added. Slight textual changes, however, or casual *addenda*, are not indicated, unless they are sufficiently important. Changes in the text of notes have not the same importance

to posterity, as changes in the text of poems. In the preface to the Prose Works, reference will be made to Wordsworth's alterations of his text. At present I refer only to his own notes to his Poems. When they were written as footnotes to the page, they remain footnotes still. When they were placed by him as prefaces to his Poems, they retain that place in this edition; but when they were appendix notes —as *e.g.* in the early editions of "Lyrical Ballads" —they are now made footnotes to the Poems they illustrate. In such a case, however, as the elaborate note to *The Excursion*, containing a reprint of the *Essay upon Epitaphs*—originally contributed to "The Friend"—it is transferred to the Prose Works, to which it belongs by priority of date; and, as it would be inexpedient to print it twice over, it is omitted from the notes to *The Excursion.*

As to the place which Notes to a poet's works should occupy, there is no doubt that numerous and lengthy ones—however valuable, or even necessary, by way of illustration,—disfigure the printed page; and some prefer that they should be thrown all together at the end of each volume, or at the close of a series; such as—in Wordsworth's case—"The River Duddon," "Ecclesiastical Sonnets," *The Prelude*, *The White Doe of Rylstone*, etc. I do not think, however, that many care to turn repeatedly to the close of a series of poems, or the end of a volume, to find an explanatory note, helped only by an index number, and when perhaps even that does not meet his eye at the foot of the page. I do not find that even ardent Wordsworth students like to search for notes in "appendices"; and perhaps the more ardent they are the less desirable is it for them thus "to hunt the waterfalls."

I have the greatest admiration for the work which Professor Dowden has done in his edition of Wordsworth; but the *plan* which he has followed, in his Aldine edition, of giving not only the Fenwick Notes, but all the changes of text introduced by Wordsworth into his successive editions, in additional editorial notes at the end of each volume—to understand which the reader must turn the pages repeatedly, from text to note and note to text, forwards and backwards, at times distractingly—is for practical purposes almost unworkable. The reader who examines Notes *critically* is ever "one among a thousand," even if they are printed at the foot of the page, and meet the eye readily. If they are consigned to the realm of *addenda* they will be read by very few, and studied by fewer.

To those who object to Notes being "thrust into view" (as it must be admitted that they are in this edition)—because it disturbs the pleasure of the reader who cares for the poetry of Wordsworth, and for the poetry alone—I may ask how many persons have read the Fenwick Notes, given together in a series, and mixed up heterogeneously with Wordsworth's own Notes to his poems, in comparison with those who have read and enjoyed them in the editions of 1857 and 1863? Professor Dowden justifies his plan of relegating the Fenwick and other notes to the end of each volume of his edition, on the ground that students of the Poet *must* take the trouble of hunting to and fro for such things. I greatly doubt if many who have read and profited—for they could not but profit—by a perusal of Professor Dowden's work, *have* taken that trouble, or that future readers of the Aldine edition will take it.

To refer, somewhat more in detail, to the features of this edition.

First. As to the *Chronological Order* of the Poems.

The chief advantage of a chronological arrangement of the Works of any author—and especially of a poet who himself adopted a different plan—is that it shows us, as nothing else can do, the growth of his own mind, the progressive development of his genius and imaginative power. By such a redistribution of what he wrote we can trace the rise, the culmination, and also—it may be—the decline and fall of his genius. Wordsworth's own arrangement—first adopted in the edition of 1815—was designed by him, with the view of bringing together, in separate classes, those Poems which referred to the same (or similar) subjects, or which were supposed to be the product of the same (or a similar) faculty, irrespective of the date of composition. Thus one group was entitled "Poems of the Fancy," another "Poems of the Imagination," a third "Poems proceeding from Sentiment and Reflection," a fourth "Epitaphs and Elegiac Pieces," again "Poems on the Naming of Places," "Memorials of Tours," "Ecclesiastical Sonnets," "Miscellaneous Sonnets," etc. The principle which guided him in this was obvious enough. It was, in some respects, a most natural arrangement; and, in now adopting a chronological order, the groups, which he constructed with so much care, are broken up. Probably every author would attach more importance to a classification of his Works, which brought them together under appropriate headings, irrespective of date, than to a method of arrangement which exhibited the growth of his own mind; and it may be taken for granted that posterity would not think

highly of any author who attached special value to this latter element. None the less posterity may wish to trace the gradual development of genius, in the imaginative writers of the past, by the help of such a subsequent rearrangement of their Works.

There are difficulties, however, in the way of such a rearrangement, some of which, in Wordsworth's case, cannot be entirely surmounted. In the case of itinerary Sonnets, referring to the same subject, the dismemberment of a series—carefully arranged by their author—seems to be specially unnatural. But Wordsworth himself sanctioned the principle. If there was a fitness in collecting all his sonnets in one volume in the year 1838, out of deference to the wishes of his friends, in order that these poems might be "brought under the eye at once"—thus removing them from their original places, in his collected works—it seems equally fitting now to rearrange them chronologically, as far as it is possible to do so. It will be seen that it is not always possible.

Then, there is the case of two Poems following each other, in Wordsworth's own arrangement, by natural affinity; such as the *Epistle to Sir George Beaumont*, written in 1811, which in almost all existing editions is followed by the Poem written in 1841, and entitled, *Upon perusing the foregoing Epistle thirty years after its composition;* or, the dedication to *The White Doe of Rylstone*, written in April 1815, while the Poem itself was written in 1807. To separate these Poems seems unnatural; and, as it would be inadmissible to print the second of the two twice over—once as a sequel to the first poem, and again in its chronological place—adherence to the latter plan has its obvious disadvantage in the case of these poems.

Mr. Aubrey de Vere is very desirous that I should arrange all the "Poems dedicated to National Independence and Liberty" together in series, as Wordsworth left them, "on the principle that, though the order of publication should as a rule be the order of composition in poetry, all rules require, as well as admit of, exceptions." As I have the greatest respect for the judgment of such an authority as Mr. de Vere, I may explain that I only venture to differ from him because there are seventy-four Poems—including the sonnets and odes—in this series, and because they cover a period ranging from 1802 to 1815. I am glad, however, that many of these sonnets can be printed together, especially the earlier ones of 1802.

After carefully weighing every consideration, it has seemed to me desirable to adopt the chronological arrangement in this particular edition; in which an attempt is made to trace the growth of Wordsworth's genius, as it is unfolded in his successive works. His own arrangement of his Poems will always possess a special interest and value; and it is not likely ever to be entirely superseded in subsequent issues of his Works. The editors and publishers of the future may possibly prefer it to the plan now adopted, and it will commend itself to many readers from the mere fact that *it was Wordsworth's own;* but in an edition such as the present—which is meant to supply material for the study of the Poet to those who may not possess, or have access to, the earlier and rarer editions—no method of arrangement can be so good as the chronological one. Its importance will be obvious after several volumes are published, when the point referred to above—viz. the evolution of the poet's genius — will be shown by the very

sequence of the subjects chosen, and their method of treatment from year to year.

The date of the composition of Wordsworth's Poems cannot always be ascertained with accuracy: and to get at the chronological order, it is not sufficient to take up his earlier volumes, and thereafter to note the additions made in subsequent ones. We now know (approximately) when each poem was first published; although, in some instances, they appeared in newspapers and magazines, and in many cases publication was long after the date of composition. For example, *Guilt and Sorrow; or, Incidents upon Salisbury Plain*—written in the years 1791-94—was not published *in extenso* till 1842. The tragedy of *The Borderers*, composed in 1795-96, was also first published in 1842. *The Prelude*—"commenced in the beginning of the year 1799, and completed in the summer of 1805"—was published posthumously in 1850: and some unpublished poems—both "of early and late years"—were first issued in 1886. A poem was frequently kept back, from some doubt as to its worth, or from a wish to alter and amend it. Of the five or six hundred sonnets that he wrote, Wordsworth said "Most of them were frequently re-touched; and, not a few, laboriously." Some poems were almost entirely recast; and occasionally fugitive verses were withheld from publication for a time, because it was hoped that they would subsequently form part of a larger whole.

In the case of many of the poems, we are left to conjecture the date of composition, although we are seldom without some clue to it. The Fenwick Notes are a great assistance in determining the chronology. These notes—which will be afterwards more fully referred to—were dictated by Wordsworth to Miss

Fenwick in the year 1843; but, at that time, his memory could not be absolutely trusted as to dates; and in some instances we know it to have been at fault. For example, he said of *The Old Cumberland Beggar* that it was "written at Racedown and Alfoxden in my twenty-third year." Now, he went to Racedown in the autumn of 1795, when he was twenty-five years old; and to Alfoxden, in the autumn of 1797, when twenty-seven. Again, the poem *Rural Architecture* is put down in the Fenwick note as "written at Townend in 1801"; but it had been published in 1800, in the second edition of "Lyrical Ballads." Similarly Wordsworth gave the dates "1801 or 1802" for *The Reverie of Poor Susan*, which had also appeared in "Lyrical Ballads," 1800.

Wordsworth's memory was not always to be trusted even when he was speaking of a group of his own Poems. For example, in the edition of 1807, there is a short series described thus, "Poems, composed during a tour, chiefly on foot." They are numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Now, one would naturally suppose that all the poems, in this set of five, were composed during the same pedestrian tour, and that they all referred to the same time. But the series contains *Alice Fell* (1802), *Beggars* (1802), *To a Sky-Lark* (1805), and *Resolution and Independence* (1802).

Much more valuable than the Fenwick notes—for a certain portion of Wordsworth's life—is his sister Dorothy's Journal. The mistakes in the former can frequently be corrected from the minutely kept diary of those early years, when the brother and sister lived together at Grasmere. The whole of that Journal, so far as it is desirable to print it for posterity, will be given in a subsequent volume.

Long before the publication of the Fenwick notes, Wordsworth himself supplied some data for a chronological arrangement of his Works. In the table of contents, prefixed to the first collected edition of 1815, in two volumes,—and also to the second collected edition of 1820, in four volumes, —there are two parallel columns: one giving the date of composition, and the other that of publication. There are numerous blanks in the former column, which was the only important one; as the year of publication could be ascertained from the editions themselves. Sometimes the date is given vaguely; as in the case of the "Sonnets dedicated to Liberty," where the note runs, "from the year 1807 to 1813." At other times, the entry of the year of publication is inaccurate; for example, the *Inscription for the spot where the Hermitage stood on St. Herbert's Island, Derwentwater*, is put down as belonging to the year 1807; but this poem does not occur in the volumes of 1807, but in the second volume of "Lyrical Ballads" (1800). It will thus be seen that it is only by comparing Wordsworth's own lists of the years to which his Poems belong, with the contents of the several editions of his Works, with the Fenwick Notes, and with his sister's Journal, that we can approximately reconstruct the true chronology. To these sources of information must be added the internal evidence of the Poems themselves, incidental references in letters to friends, and stray hints gathered from various quarters.

Many new sources of information as to the date of the composition of the Poems became known to me during the publication of my previous edition, and after its issue; the most important being the Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth. These discoveries

showed that my chronological table of 1882—although then, relatively, "up to date"—was incomplete. The tables constructed by Mr. Tutin and by Professor Dowden are both more accurate than it was. It is impossible to attain to finality in such a matter; and several facts, afterwards discovered, and mentioned in the later volumes of my previous edition, have been used against the conclusions come to in the earlier ones. I have thus supplied the feathers for a few subsequent critical arrows. The shots have not been unkindly ones; and I am glad of the result, viz. that our knowledge of the dates—both as to the composition and first publication of the poems—is now much more exact than before. When a conjectural one is given in this edition, the fact is always mentioned.

This chronological method of arrangement, however, has its limits. It is not possible always to adopt it: nor is it invariably *necessary*, even in order to obtain a true view of the growth of Wordsworth's mind. In this—as in so many other things—wisdom lies in the avoidance of extremes; the extreme of rigid fidelity to the order of time on the one hand, and the extreme of an irrational departure from it on the other. While an effort has been made to discover the exact order of the composition of the poems—and this is shown, not only in the Chronological Table, but at the beginning of each separate poem—it has been considered expedient to depart from that order in printing some of the poems. In certain cases a poem was begun and laid aside, and again resumed at intervals; and it is difficult to know to what year the larger part of it should be assigned. When we know the date at which a poem was commenced, and that it was

finished "long afterwards," but have no clue as to the year, it is assigned to the year in which it was begun. For example, the *Address to Kilchurn Castle* was begun in 1803, but only the first three lines were written then. Wordsworth tells us that "the rest was added many years after," but when we know not; and the poem was not published till 1827. In such a case, it is placed in this edition as if it belonged chronologically to 1803, and retains its place in the series of Poems which memorialise the Tour in Scotland of that year. On a similar principle, *The Highland Girl* is placed in the same series; although Dorothy Wordsworth tells us, in her Journal of the Tour, that it was composed "not long after our return from Scotland"; and *Glen Almain*—although written afterwards at Rydal—retains its published place in the memorial group. Again the *Departure from the Vale of Grasmere, August 1803*, is prefixed to the same series; although it was not written till 1811, and first published in 1827. To give symmetry to such a Series, it is necessary to depart from the exact chronological order—the departure being duly indicated.

On the same principle I have followed the *Address to the Scholars of the Village School of* ——, by its natural sequel—*By the Side of the Grave some Years after*, the date of the composition of which is unknown: and the *Epistle to Sir George Beaumont* (1811) is followed by the later Lines, to which Wordsworth gave the most prosaic title—he was often infelicitous in his titles — *Upon perusing the foregoing Epistle thirty years after its composition.* A like remark applies to the poem *Beggars*, which is followed by its own *Sequel*, although the order of date is disturbed; while all the "Epitaphs," translated from Chiabrera, are printed together.

It is manifestly appropriate that the poems belonging to a series — such as the "Ecclesiastical Sonnets," or those referring to the "Duddon" — should be brought together, as Wordsworth finally arranged them; even although we may be aware that some of them were written subsequently, and placed in the middle of the series. The sonnets referring to "Aspects of Christianity in America"—inserted in the 1845 and 1849-50 editions of the collected Works —are found in no previous edition or version of the "Ecclesiastical Sonnets." These, along with some others on the Offices of the English Liturgy, were suggested to Wordsworth by an American prelate, Bishop Doane, and by Professor Henry Reed;[1] but we do not know in what year they were written. The "Ecclesiastical Sonnets"—first called "Ecclesiastical Sketches"—were written in the years 1820-22. The above additions to them appeared twenty-five years afterwards; but they ought manifestly to retain their place, as arranged by Wordsworth in the edition of 1845. The case is much the same with regard to the "Duddon Sonnets." They were first published in 1820: but No. xiv. beginning—

> O mountain Stream! the Shepherd and his Cot,

was written in the year 1806, and appears in the edition of 1807. This sonnet will be printed in the series to which it belongs, and not in its chronological place. I think it would be equally unjust to remove it from the group—in which it helps to form a unity—and to print it twice over.[2] On the other hand, the

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[1] See *Memoirs of William Wordsworth*, ii. pp. 113, 114.

[2] It is however different with the fragments which were published in all the editions issued in the poet's lifetime, and afterwards in *The Prelude*, such as the lines on "the immortal

series of "Poems composed during a Tour in Scotland, and on the English Border, in the Autumn of 1831" —and first published in the year 1835, in the volume entitled "Yarrow Revisited, and Other Poems"—contains two, which Wordsworth himself tells us were composed earlier; and there is no reason why these poems should not be restored to their chronological place. The series of itinerary sonnets, published along with them in the Yarrow volume of 1835, is the record of another Scottish tour, taken in the year 1833; and Wordsworth says of them that they were "composed *or suggested* during a tour in the summer of 1833." We cannot now discover which of them were written during the tour, and which at Rydal Mount after his return; but it is obvious that they should be printed in the order in which they were left by him, in 1835. It may be noted that almost all the "Evening Voluntaries" belong to these years—1832 to 1835—when the author was from sixty-two to sixty-five years of age.

Wordsworth's habit of revision may perhaps explain the mistakes into which he occasionally fell as to the dates of his Poems, and the difficulty of reconciling what he says, as to the year of composition, with the date assigned by his sister in her Journal. When he says "written in 1801, or 1802," he may be referring to the last revision which he gave to his work. Certain it is, however, that he sometimes gave a date for the composition, which was subsequent to the publication of the poem in question.

In the case of those poems to which no date was attached, I have tried to find a clue by which to fix an

boy" of Windermere. These are printed in their chronological place, and also in the posthumous poem.

approximate one. Obviously, it would not do to place all the undated poems in a class by themselves. Such an arrangement would be thoroughly artificial; and, while we are in many instances left to conjecture, we can always say that such and such a poem was composed not later than a particular year. When the precise date is undiscoverable, I have thought it best to place the poem in or immediately before the year in which it was first published.

Poems which were several years in process of composition, having been laid aside, and taken up repeatedly; *e.g.* *The Prelude*, which was composed between the years 1799 and 1805—are placed in the year in which they were finished. Disputable questions as to the date of any poem are dealt with in the editorial note prefixed or appended to it.

There is one Poem which I have intentionally placed out of its chronological place, viz. the *Ode, Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood.* It was written at intervals from 1803 to 1806, and was first published in the edition of 1807, where it stood at the end of the second volume. In every subsequent edition of the collected Works—1815 to 1850—it closed the groups of poems; *The Excursion* only following it, in a volume of its own. This was an arrangement made by Wordsworth, of set purpose, and steadily adhered to—the *Ode* forming as it were the High Altar of his poetic Cathedral. As he wished it to retain that place in subsequent editions of his Works, it retains it in this one.

Mr. Arnold's arrangement of the Poems, in his volume of Selections,[1] is extremely interesting and

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[1] *Poems of Wordsworth selected and arranged by Matthew Arnold.* London: Macmillan and Co.

valuable; but, as to the method of grouping adopted, I am not sure that it is better than Wordsworth's own. As a descriptive title, "Poems of Sentiment and Reflection" is quite as good as "Poems akin to the Antique," and "Poems of the Fancy" quite as appropriate as "Poems of Ballad Form."

Wordsworth's arrangement of his Poems in groups was psychologically very interesting; but it is open to many objections. Unfortunately Wordsworth was not himself consistent—in the various editions issued by himself—either in the class into which he relegated each poem, or the order in which he placed it there. There is tantalising topsy-turvyism in this, so that an editor who adopts it is almost compelled to select Wordsworth's latest grouping, which was not always his best.

Sir William Rowan Hamilton wrote to Mr. Aubrey de Vere in 1835 that Dora Wordsworth told him that her father "was sometimes at a loss whether to refer her to the 'Poems of the Imagination,' or the 'Poems of the Fancy,' for some particular passage." Aubrey de Vere himself considered Wordsworth's arrangement as "a parade of system," and wrote of it, "I cannot help thinking that in it, he mistakes classification for method."[1] I confess that it is often difficult to see why some of the poems were assigned by their author to the realm of the "Fancy," the "Imagination," and "Sentiment and Reflection" respectively. In a note to *The Horn of Egremont Castle* (edition 1815) Wordsworth speaks of it as "referring to the imagination," rather than as being "produced by it"; and says that he would not have placed it

[1] See the *Life of Sir W. Rowan Hamilton*, vol. ii. pp. 132, 135.

amongst his "Poems of the Imagination," "but to avoid a needless multiplication of classes"; and in the editions of 1827 and 1832 he actually included the great *Ode* on Immortality among his "Epitaphs and Elegiac Poems"! As late as 27th September 1845, he wrote to Professor Henry Reed, "Following your example" (*i.e.* the example set in Reed's American edition of the Poems), "I have greatly extended the class entitled 'Poems of the Imagination,' thinking as you must have done that, if Imagination were predominant in the class, it was not indispensable that it should pervade every poem which it contained. Limiting the class as I had done before, seemed to imply, and to the uncandid or observing did so, that the faculty, which is the *primum mobile* in poetry, had little to do, in the estimation of the author, with pieces not arranged under that head. I therefore feel much obliged to you for suggesting by your practice the plan which I have adopted."

Could anything show more explicitly than this that Wordsworth was not perfectly satisfied with his own artificial groups? Professor Reed, in his American edition of 1837, however, acted on Wordsworth's expressed intention of distributing the contents of "Yarrow Revisited, and Other Poems" amongst the classes. He tells us that he "interspersed the contents of this volume among the Poems already arranged" by Wordsworth.[1]

It may also be mentioned that not only members of his own household, but many of Wordsworth's friends—notably Charles Lamb—expressed a preference for a different arrangement of his Poems from that which he had adopted.

[1] See the Preface to the American edition of 1837.

Second. The various Readings, or variations of text, made by Wordsworth during his lifetime, or written by him on copies of his Poems, or discovered in MS. letters, from himself, or his sister, or his wife, are given in footnotes in this edition. Few English poets changed their text more frequently, or with more fastidiousness, than Wordsworth did. He did not always alter it for the better. Every alteration however, which has been discovered by me, whether for the better or for the worse, is here printed in full. We have thus a record of the fluctuations of his own mind as to the form in which he wished his Poems to appear; and this record casts considerable light on the development of his genius.[1]

A knowledge of these changes of text can only be obtained in one or other of two ways. Either the reader must have access to all the thirty-two editions of Poems, the publication of which Wordsworth personally supervised; or, he must have all the changes in the successive editions, exhibited in the form of footnotes, and appended to the particular text that is selected and printed in the body of the work. It is extremely difficult—in some cases quite impossible—to obtain the early editions. The great public libraries of the country do not possess them all.[2] It is therefore necessary to fall back upon the latter plan, which seems the only one by which a knowledge of the changes of the text can be made

[1] It need hardly be explained that, in the case of a modern poet, these various readings are not like the conjectural guesses of critics and commentators as to what the original text was (as in the case of the Greek Poets, or of Dante, or even of Shakespeare). They are the actual alterations, introduced deliberately as improvements, by the hand of the poet himself.

[2] The collection in the British Museum, and those in all the University Libraries of the country, are incomplete.

accessible, either to the general reader, or to the special student of English Poetry.

The text which—after much consideration—I have resolved to place throughout, in the body of the work, is Wordsworth's own final *textus receptus*, *i.e.* the text of 1849-50, reproduced in the posthumous edition of 1857;[1] and since opinion will doubtless differ as to the wisdom of this selection, it may be desirable to state at some length the reasons which have led me to adopt it.

There are only three possible courses open to an editor, who wishes to give—along with the text selected—all the various readings chronologically arranged as footnotes. Either, 1st, the earliest text may be taken, or 2nd, the latest may be chosen, or 3rd, the text may be selected from different editions, so as to present each poem in its best state (according to the judgment of the editor), in whatever edition it is found. A composite text, made up from two or more editions, would be inadmissible.

Now, most persons who have studied the subject know that Wordsworth's best text is to be found, in one poem in its earliest edition, in another in its latest, and in a third in some intermediate edition. I cannot agree either with the statement that he always altered for the worse, or that he always altered for the better. His critical judgment was not nearly so unerring in this respect as Coleridge's was, or as Tennyson's has been. It may be difficult, therefore, to assign an altogether satisfactory reason for adopting either the earliest or the latest text; and at first sight, the remaining alternative plan may seem the

[1] The publication of this edition was superintended by Mr. Carter, who acted as Wordsworth's secretary for thirty-seven years, and was appointed one of his literary executors.

wisest of the three. There are indeed difficulties in the way of the adoption of any one of the methods suggested; and as I adopt the latest text—not because it is always intrinsically the best, but on other grounds to be immediately stated—it may clear the way, if reference be made in the first instance to the others, and to the reasons for abandoning them.

As to a selection of the text from various editions, this would doubtless be the best plan, were it a practicable one; and perhaps it may be attainable some day. But Wordsworth is as yet too near us for such an editorial treatment of his Works to be successful. The fundamental objection to it is that scarcely two minds—even among the most competent of contemporary judges—will agree as to what the best text is. An edition arranged on this principle could not possibly be acceptable to more than a few persons. Of course no arrangement of any kind can escape adverse criticism: it would be most unfortunate if it did. But this particular edition would fail in its main purpose, if questions of individual taste were made primary, and not secondary; and an arrangement, which gave scope for the arbitrary selection of particular texts,—according to the wisdom, or the want of wisdom, of the editor,—would deservedly meet with severe criticism in many quarters. Besides, such a method of arrangement would not indicate the growth of the Poet's mind, and the development of his genius. If an editor wished to indicate his own opinion of the best text for each poem—under the idea that his judgment might be of some use to other people—it would be wiser to do so by means of some mark or marginal note, than by printing his selected text in the main body of the work. He could thus at once preserve

the chronological order of the readings, indicate his own preference, and leave it to others to select what they preferred. Besides, the compiler of such an edition would often find himself in doubt as to what the best text really was, the merit of the different readings being sometimes almost equal, or very nearly balanced; and, were he to endeavour to get out of the difficulty by obtaining the judgments of literary men, or even of contemporary poets, he would find that their opinions would in most cases be dissimilar, if they did not openly conflict. Those who cannot come to a final decision as to their own text would not be likely to agree as to the merits of particular readings in the poems of their predecessors. Unanimity of opinion on this point is indeed quite unattainable.

Nevertheless, it would be easy for an editor to show the unfortunate result of keeping rigorously either to the latest or to the earliest text of Wordsworth. If, on the one hand, the latest were taken, it could be shown that many of the changes introduced into it were for the worse, and some of them very decidedly so. For example, in the poem *To a Skylark*—composed in 1825—the second verse, retained in the editions of 1827, 1832, 1836, and 1843, was unaccountably dropped out in the editions of 1845 and 1849. The following is the complete poem of 1825, as published in 1827.

Ethereal Minstrel! Pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

To the last point of vision, and beyond,
Mount, daring Warbler! that love-prompted strain,
('Twixt thee and thine a never-failing bond)

Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain:
Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege! to sing
All independent of the leafy spring.

Leave to the Nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine;
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with rapture more divine;
Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!

There is no doubt that the first and third stanzas are the finest, and some may respect the judgment that cut down the Poem by the removal of its second verse: but others will say, if it was right that such a verse should be removed, why were many others of questionable merit allowed to remain? Why was such a poem as *The Glowworm*, of the edition of 1807, never republished; while *The Waterfall and the Eglantine*, and *To the Spade of a Friend*, were retained? To give one other illustration, where a score are possible. In the sonnet, belonging to the year 1807, beginning—

"Beloved Vale!" I said, "when I shall con,"

we find, in the latest text, the lines—first adopted in 1827—

I stood, of simple shame the blushing Thrall;
So narrow seemed the brooks, the fields so small,

while the early edition of 1807 contains the far happier lines—

To see the Trees, which I had thought so tall,
Mere dwarfs; the Brooks so narrow, Fields so small.

On the other hand, if the earliest text be invariably retained, some of the best poems will be spoiled (or the improvements lost), since Wordsworth did usually alter for the better. For example, few persons will doubt that the form in which the second stanza of

the poem *To the Cuckoo* (written in 1802) appeared in 1845, is an improvement on all its predecessors. I give the readings of 1807, 1815, 1820, 1827, and 1845.

While I am lying on the grass,
I hear thy restless shout:
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
About, and all about! 1807.

While I am lying on the grass,
Thy loud note smites my ear!—
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off and near! 1815.

While I am lying on the grass,
Thy loud note smites my ear!
It seems to fill the whole air's space,
At once far off and near. 1820.

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear,
That seems to fill the whole air's space,
As loud far off as near. 1827.

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear,
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near. 1845.

Similarly, in each of the three poems *To the Daisy*, composed in 1802, and in the *Afterthought, to the Duddon*, the alterations introduced into the latest editions were all improvements upon the early version.

It might be urged that these considerations would warrant the interference of an editor, and justify him in selecting the text which he thought the best upon the whole; but this must be left to posterity. When editors can escape the bias of contemporary thought and feeling, when their judgments are refined by dis-

tance and mellowed by the new literary standards of the intervening years,—when in fact Wordsworth is as far away from his critics as Shakespeare now is—it may be possible to adjust a final text. But the task is beyond the power of the present generation.

It may farther be urged that if this reasoning be valid,—and if, for the present, one text must be retained uniformly throughout,—the natural plan is to take the earliest, and not the latest; and this has some recommendations. It seems more simple, more natural, and certainly the easiest. We have a natural sequence, if we begin with the earliest and go on to the latest readings. Then, all the readers of Wordsworth, who care to possess or to consult the present edition, will doubtless possess one or other of the complete copies of his works, which contain his final text; while probably not one in twenty have ever seen the first edition of any of his poems, with the exception of *The Prelude*. It is true that if the reader turns to a footnote to compare the versions of different years, while he is reading for the sake of the poetry, he will be so distracted that the effect of the poem as a whole will be entirely lost; because the critical spirit, which judges of the text, works apart from the spirit of sympathetic appreciation, in which all poetry should be read. But it is not necessary to turn to the footnotes, and to mark what may be called the literary growth of a poem, while it is being read for its own sake: and these notes are printed in smaller type, so as not to obtrude themselves on the eye of the reader.

Against the adoption of the earlier text, there is this fatal objection, that if it is to be done at all, it

must be done throughout; and, in the earliest poems Wordsworth wrote—viz. *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*,—the subsequent alterations almost amounted to a cancelling of the earlier version. His changes were all, or almost all, unmistakably for the better. Indeed, there was little in these works—in the form in which they first appeared—to lead to the belief that an original poet had arisen in England. It is true that Coleridge saw in them the signs of the dawn of a new era, and wrote thus of *Descriptive Sketches*, before he knew its author, "Seldom, if ever, was the emergence of a great and original poetic genius above the literary horizon more evidently announced." Nevertheless the earliest text of these *Sketches* is, in many places, so artificial, prosaic, and dull, that its reproduction (except as an appendix, or in the form of footnotes) would be an injustice to Wordsworth.[1] On the other hand, the passages subsequently cancelled are so numerous, and so long, that if placed in footnotes the latter would in some instances be more extensive than the text. The quarto of 1793 will therefore be reprinted in full as an Appendix to the first volume of this edition. The *School Exercise written at Hawkshead* in the poet's fourteenth year, will be found in vol. viii. Passing over these juvenile efforts, there are poems—such as *Guilt and Sorrow*, *Peter*

[1] Let the indiscriminate admirer of "first editions" turn to this quarto, and perhaps even he may wonder why it has been rescued from oblivion. I am only aware of the existence of five copies of the edition of 1793; and although it has a certain autobiographic value, I do not think that many who read it once will return to it again, except as a literary curiosity. Here—and not in "Lyrical Ballads" or *The Excursion*—was the quarry where Jeffrey or Gifford might have found abundant material for criticism.

Bell, and many others—in which the earlier text is an inferior one, which was either corrected or abandoned by Wordsworth in his maturer years. It would be a conspicuous blunder to print—in the place of honour,—the crude original which was afterwards repudiated by its author.

It may be remembered, in connection with Wordsworth's text, that he himself said, "I am for the most part uncertain about my success in altering poems; but, in this case" (he is speaking of an insertion) "I am sure I have produced a great improvement." (*Memoirs of Wordsworth*, vol. i. p. 174.)[1] Again, in writing to Mr. Dyce in 1830, "You know what importance I attach to following strictly the last copy of the text of an author."

It is also worthy of note that the study of their chronology casts some light on the changes which the poems underwent. The second edition of "Lyrical Ballads" appeared in 1800. In that edition the text of 1798 is scarcely altered: but, in the year in which it was published, Wordsworth was engrossed with his settlement at Grasmere; and, in the springtime of creative work, he probably never thought of revising his earlier pieces. In the year 1800, he composed at least twenty-five new poems. The third edition of "Lyrical Ballads" appeared in 1802; and during that year he wrote forty-three new poems, many of them amongst the most perfect of his Lyrics. His critical instinct had become much more delicate since 1800: and it is not surprising to find—as we do find—that between the text of the "Lyrical Ballads"

[1] It is unfortunate that the *Memoirs* do not tell us to what poem the remark applies, or to whom the letter containing it was addressed.

of 1800, and that of 1802, there are many important variations. This is seen, for example, in the way in which he dealt with *The Female Vagrant*, which is altered throughout. Its early redundance is pruned away; and, in many instances, the final text, sanctioned in 1845, had been adopted in 1803. Without going into further detail, it is sufficient to remark that in the year 1803 Wordsworth's critical faculty, the faculty of censorship, had developed almost step for step with the creative originality of his genius. In that prolific year, when week by week, almost day by day, fresh poems were thrown off with marvellous facility—as we see from his sister's Journal—he had become a severe, if not a fastidious, critic of his own earlier work. A further explanation of the absence of critical revision, in the edition of 1800, may be found in the fact that during that year Wordsworth was engaged in writing the "Preface" to his Poems; which dealt, in so remarkable a manner, with the nature of Poetry in general, and with his own theory of it in particular.

A further reference to the *Evening Walk* will illustrate Wordsworth's way of dealing with his earlier text in his later editions. This Poem showed from the first a minute observation of Nature—not only in her external form and colour, but also in her suggestiveness—though not in her symbolism; and we also find the same transition from Nature to Man, the same interest in rural life, and the same lingering over its incidents that we see in his maturer poems. Nevertheless, there is much that is conventional in the first edition of *An Evening Walk*, published in 1793. I need only mention, as a sample, the use of the phrase "silent tides" to describe the waters of a lake.

When this poem was revised, in the year 1815—with a view to its insertion in the first edition of the collected works—Wordsworth merely omitted large portions of it, and some of its best passages were struck out. He scarcely amended the text at all. In 1820, however, he pruned and improved it throughout; so that between this poem, as recast in 1820 (and reproduced almost *verbatim* in the next two editions of 1827 and 1832), and his happiest descriptions of Nature in his most inspired moods, there is no great difference. But, in 1836, he altered it still further in detail; and in that state practically left it, apparently not caring to revise it further. In the edition of 1845, however, there are several changes. So far as I can judge, there is one alteration for the worse, and one only. The reading, in the edition of 1793,

> In these lone vales, if aught of faith may claim,
> Thin silver hairs, and ancient hamlet fame;
> When up the hills, as now, retreats the light,
> Strange apparitions mock the village sight,

is better than that finally adopted,

> In these secluded vales, if village fame,
> Confirmed by hoary hairs, belief may claim;
> When up the hills, as now, retired the light,
> Strange apparitions mocked the shepherd's sight.

It will be seen, however, from the changes made in the text of this poem, how Wordsworth's observation of Nature developed, how thoroughly dissatisfied he soon became with everything conventional, and discarded every image not drawn directly or at first hand from Nature.

The text adopted in the present edition is, for the reasons stated, that which was finally sanctioned by Wordsworth himself, in the last edition of his Poems

(1849-50). The earlier readings, occurring in previous editions, are given in footnotes; and it may be desirable to explain the way in which these are arranged. It will be seen that whenever the text has been changed a date is given in the footnote, *before* the other readings are added. This date, which accompanies the reference number of the footnote, indicates the year in which the reading finally retained was first adopted by Wordsworth. The earlier readings then follow, in chronological order, with the year to which they belong;[1] and it is in every case to be assumed that the last of the changes indicated was continued in all subsequent editions of the works. No direct information is given as to how long a particular reading was retained, or through how many editions it ran. It is to be assumed, however, that it was retained in all intermediate editions till the next change of text is stated. It would encumber the notes with too many figures if, in every instance in which a change was made, the corresponding state of the text in all the other editions was indicated. But if no new reading follows the text quoted, it is to be taken for granted that the reading in question was continued in every subsequent edition, until the date which accompanies the reference figure.

Two illustrations will make this clear. The first is a case in which the text was only altered once, the

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[1] It is important to note that the printed text in several of the editions is occasionally cancelled in the list of *errata*, at the beginning or the end of the volume: also that many copies of the early editions (notably those of 1800), were bound up without the full *errata* list. In this edition there were two such lists, one of them very brief. But the cancelled words in these *errata* lists, must be taken into account, in determining the text of each edition.

second an instance in which it was altered six times. In the *Evening Walk* the following lines occur—

> The dog, loud barking, 'mid the glittering rocks,
> Hunts, where his master points, the intercepted flocks.

And the footnote is as follows—

1836.
> That, barking busy 'mid the glittering rocks,
> Hunts, where he points, the intercepted flocks; 1793.

In the light of what has been said above, and by reference to the Bibliography, it will be seen from these two dates that the original text of 1793—given in the footnote—was continued in the editions of 1820, 1827, and 1832 (it was omitted from the "extract" of 1815); that it was changed in the year 1836; and that this reading was retained in the editions of 1843, 1845, and 1849.

Again, in *Simon Lee*, the lines occur—

> But what to them avails the land
> Which he can till no longer?

And the following are the footnotes—

1845.
> But what avails the land to them,
> Which they can till no longer? 1798.
>
> "But what," saith he, "avails the land,
> Which I can till no longer?" 1827.
>
> But what avails it now, the land
> Which he can till no longer? 1832.
>
> 'Tis his, but what avails the land
> Which he can till no longer? 1837.
>
> The time, alas! is come when he
> Can till the land no longer. 1840.
>
> The time is also come when he
> Can till the land no longer. C.

From this it will be seen that the text adopted in the first edition of "Lyrical Ballads" in 1798 was retained in the editions of 1800, 1802, 1805, 1815, and 1820; that it was altered in each of the editions of 1827, 1832, 1837, 1840, as also in the MS. readings in Lord Coleridge's copy of the works, and in the edition of 1845; and that the version of 1845 was retained in the edition of 1849-50. It should be added that when a verse, or stanza, or line—occurring in one or other of the earlier editions—was omitted from that of 1849, the footnote simply contains the extract along with the date of the year or years in which it occurs; and that, in such cases, the date does not follow the reference number of the footnote, but is placed for obvious reasons at the end of the extract.

The same thing is true of *Descriptive Sketches*. In the year 1827, there were scarcely any alterations made on the text of the poem, as printed in 1820; still fewer were added in 1832; but for the edition of 1836 the whole was virtually rewritten, and in that state it was finally left, although a few significant changes were made in 1845.

Slight changes of spelling which occur in the successive editions, are not mentioned. When, however, the change is one of transposition, although the text remains unaltered,—as is largely the case in *Simon Lee*, for example—it is always indicated.

It will be further observed that, at the beginning of every poem, two dates are given; the first, on the left-hand side, is the date of composition; the second, on the right-hand side, is the date of the first publication. In what class the poem first appeared, and the changes (if any) which subsequently occurred in its title, are mentioned in the note appended.

Third. In the present edition several suggested changes of text, which were written by Wordsworth on the margin of a copy of his edition of 1836-7, which he kept beside him at Rydal Mount, are published. These MS. notes seem to have been written by himself, or dictated to others, at intervals between the years 1836 and 1850, and they are thus a record of passing thoughts, or "moods of his own mind," during these years. Some of these were afterwards introduced into the editions of 1842, 1846, and 1849; others were not made use of. The latter have now a value of their own, as indicating certain new phases of thought and feeling, in Wordsworth's later years. I owe my knowledge of them, and the permission to use them, to the kindness of the late Chief Justice of England, Lord Coleridge. The following is an extract from a letter from him:—

"FOX GHYLL, AMBLESIDE, *4th October* 1881.

"I have been long intending to write you as to the manuscript notes and alterations in Wordsworth's poems, which you have had the opportunity of seeing, and, so far as you thought fit, of using for your edition. They came into my possession in this way. I saw them advertised in a catalogue which was sent me, and at my request the book was very courteously forwarded to me for my inspection. It appeared to me of sufficient interest and value to induce me to buy it; and I accordingly became the purchaser.

"It is a copy of the edition in six volumes, the publication of which began in the year 1836; and of the volume containing the collected sonnets, which was afterwards printed uniformly with that edition. It appears to have been the copy which Wordsworth himself used for correcting, altering, and adding to the poems contained in it. As you have seen, in some of the

poems the alterations are very large, amounting sometimes to a complete rewriting of considerable passages. Many of these alterations have been printed in subsequent editions; some have not; two or three small poems, as far as I know, have not been hitherto published. Much of the writing is Wordsworth's own; but perhaps the larger portion is the hand-writing of others, one or more, not familiar to me as Wordsworth's is.

"How the volumes came to be sold I do not know.

* * * * *

Such as they are, and whatever be their interest or value, you are, as far as I am concerned, heartily welcome to them; and I shall be glad indeed if they add in the least degree to make your edition more worthy of the great man for whom my admiration grows every day I live, and my deep gratitude to whom will cease only with my life, and my reason."

This precious copy of the edition of 1836-7 is now the property of Lady Coleridge. I re-examined it in 1894, and added several readings, which I had omitted to note twelve years ago, when Lord Coleridge first showed it to me. I should add that, since the issue of the volumes of 1882-6, many other MS. copies of individual Poems have come under my notice; and that every important variation of text in them is incorporated in this edition.

As it is impossible to discover the precise year in which the suggested alterations of text were written by Wordsworth, on the margin of the edition of 1836, they will be indicated, wherever they occur, by the initial letter C. Comparatively few changes occur in the poems of early years.

A copy of the 1814 (quarto) edition of *The Excursion*, now in the possession of a grandson of the poet, the Rev. John Wordsworth, Gosforth

Rectory, Cumberland—which was the copy Wordsworth kept at Rydal Mount for annotation and correction, much in the same way as he kept the edition of 1836-7—has also been kindly sent to me by its present owner, for examination and use in this edition; and, in it, I have found some additional readings.

Fourth. In the present edition all the Notes and Memoranda, explanatory of the Poems, which Wordsworth dictated to Miss Fenwick, are given in full. Miss Fenwick lived much at Rydal Mount, during the later years of the Poet's life; and it is to their friendship, and to her inducing Wordsworth to dictate these Notes, that we owe most of the information we possess, as to the occasions and circumstances under which his poems were composed. These notes were first made use of—although only in a fragmentary manner—by the late Bishop of Lincoln, in the *Memoirs* of his uncle. They were afterwards incorporated in full in the edition of 1857, issued by Mr. Moxon, under the direction of Mr. Carter; and in the centenary edition. They were subsequently printed in *The Prose Works of Wordsworth*, edited by Dr. Grosart; and in my edition of 1882-6. I am uncertain whether it was the original MS., written by Miss Fenwick, or the copy of it afterwards taken for Miss Quillinan, to which Dr. Grosart had access. The text of these Notes, as printed in the edition of 1857, is certainly (in very many cases) widely different from what is given in *The Prose Works* of 1876. I have made many corrections—from the MS. which I have examined with care—of errors which exist in all previously printed copies of these Notes, including my own.

What appears in this volume is printed from a MS., which Miss Quillinan gave me to examine and copy, and which she assured me was the original one. The proper place for these Fenwick Notes is doubtless that which was assigned to them by the editor of 1857, viz. before the poems which they respectively illustrate.

Fifth. Topographical Notes, explanatory of the allusions made by Wordsworth to the localities in the English Lake District, and elsewhere, are added throughout the volumes. This has already been attempted to some extent by several writers, but a good deal more remains to be done; and I may repeat what I wrote on this subject, in 1878.

Many of Wordsworth's allusions to Place are obscure, and the exact localities difficult to identify. It is doubtful if he cared whether they could be afterwards traced out or not; and in reference to one particular rock, referred to in the "Poems on the Naming of Places," when asked by a friend to localise it, he declined; replying to the question, "Yes, that—or any other that will suit!" There is no doubt that, in many instances, his allusions to place are intentionally vague; and, in some of his most realistic passages, he avowedly weaves together a description of localities remote from each other.

It is true that "Poems of Places" are not meant to be photographs; and were they simply to reproduce the features of a particular district, and be an exact transcript of reality, they would be literary photographs, and not poems. Poetry cannot, in the nature of things, be a mere register of phenomena appealing to the eye or the ear. No imaginative writer, however, in the whole range of English Literature, is so

peculiarly identified with locality as Wordsworth is; and there is not one on the roll of poets, the appreciation of whose writings is more aided by an intimate knowledge of the district in which he lived. The wish to be able to identify his allusions to those places, which he so specially interpreted, is natural to every one who has ever felt the spell of his genius; and it is indispensable to all who would know the special charm of a region, which he described as "a national property," and of which he, beyond all other men, may be said to have effected the literary "conveyance" to posterity.

But it has been asked—and will doubtless be asked again—what is the use of a minute identification of all these places? Is not the general fact that Wordsworth described this district of mountain, vale, and mere, sufficient, without any further attempt at localisation? The question is more important, and has wider bearings, than appears upon the surface.

It must be admitted, on the one hand, that the discovery of the precise point in every local allusion is not necessary to an understanding or appreciation of the Poems. But, it must be remembered, on the other hand, that Wordsworth was never contented with simply copying what he saw in Nature. Of the *Evening Walk*—written in his eighteenth year—he says that the plan of the poem "has not been confined to a particular walk or an individual place; a proof (of which I was unconscious at the time) of my unwillingness to submit the poetic spirit to the chains of fact and real circumstance. The country is idealised rather than described in any one of its local aspects."[1] Again, he says of the *Lines*

[1] I. F. note. See vol. i. p. 5.

written while Sailing in a Boat at Evening: "It was during a solitary walk on the banks of the Cam that I was first struck with this appearance, and applied it to my own feelings in the manner here expressed, changing the scene to the Thames, near Windsor";[1] and of *Guilt and Sorrow*, he said, "To obviate some distraction in the minds of those who are well acquainted with Salisbury Plain, it may be proper to say, that of the features described as belonging to it, one or two are taken from other desolate parts of England."[2] In *The Excursion* he passes from Langdale to Grasmere, over to Patterdale, back to Grasmere, and again to Hawes Water, without warning; and even in the case of the "Duddon Sonnets" he introduces a description taken direct from Rydal. Mr. Aubrey de Vere tells of a conversation he had with Wordsworth, in which he vehemently condemned the ultra-realistic poet, who goes to Nature with "pencil and note-book, and jots down whatever strikes him most," adding, "Nature does not permit an inventory to be made of her charms! He should have left his pencil and note-book at home; fixed his eye as he walked with a reverent attention on all that surrounded him, and taken all into a heart that could understand and enjoy. Afterwards he would have discovered that while much of what he had admired was preserved to him, much was also most wisely obliterated. *That which remained, the picture surviving in his mind, would have presented the ideal and essential truth of the scene, and done so in large part by discarding much which, though in itself striking, was not characteristic.* In every scene, many of the most brilliant details are

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[1] I. F. note. See vol. i. p. 32.
[2] Advertisement. See vol. i. p. 78.

but accidental." The two last sentences of this extract give admirable expression to one feature of Wordsworth's interpretation of Nature. In the deepest poetry, as in the loftiest music,—in Wordsworth's lyrics as in Beethoven's sonatas—it is by what they unerringly suggest and not by what they exhaustively express that their truth and power are known. "In what he leaves unsaid," wrote Schiller, "I discover the master of style." It depends, no doubt, upon the vision of the "inward eye," and the reproductive power of the idealising mind, whether the result is a travesty of Nature, or the embodiment of a truth higher than Nature yields. On the other hand, it is equally certain that the identification of localities casts a sudden light in many instances upon obscure passages in a poem, and is by far the best commentary that can be given. It is much to be able to compare the actual scene, with the ideal creation suggested by it; as the latter was both Wordsworth's reading of the text of Nature, and his interpretation of it. In his seventy-third year, he said, looking back on his *Evening Walk*, that there was not an image in the poem which he had not observed, and that he "recollected the time and place where most of them were noted." In the Fenwick notes, we constantly find him saying, "the fact occurred strictly as recorded," "the fact was as mentioned in the poem"; and the fact very often involved the accessories of place.

Any one who has tried to trace out the allusions in the "Poems on the Naming of Places," or to discover the site of "Michael's Sheepfold," to identify "Ghimmer Crag," or "Thurston-Mere,"—not to speak of the individual "rocks" and "recesses" near Blea Tarn at the head of Little Langdale so minutely described in

The Excursion,—will admit that local commentary is an important aid to the understanding of Wordsworth. If to read the *Yew Trees* in Borrowdale itself,

> in mute repose
> To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
> Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves,

to read *The Brothers* in Ennerdale, or "The Daffodils" by the shore of Ullswater, gives a new significance to these "poems of the imagination," a discovery of the obscurer allusions to place or scene will deepen our appreciation of those passages in which his idealism is most pronounced. Every one knows Kirkstone Pass, Aira Force, Dungeon Ghyll, the Wishing Gate, and Helm Crag: many persons know the Glowworm Rock, and used to know the Rock of Names; but where is "Emma's Dell"? or "the meeting point of two highways," so characteristically described in the twelfth book of *The Prelude?* and who will fix the site of the pool in Rydal Upper Park, immortalised in the poem *To M. H.?* or identify "Joanna's Rock"? Many of the places in the English Lake District are undergoing change, and every year the local allusions will be more difficult to trace. Perhaps the most interesting memorial of the poet which existed, viz. the "Rock of Names," on the shore of Thirlmere, is now sunk under the waters of a Manchester reservoir. Other memorials are perishing by the wear and tear of time, the decay of old buildings, the alteration of roads, the cutting down of trees, and the modernising, or "improving," of the district generally. All this is inevitable. But it is well that many of the natural objects, over and around which the light of Wordsworth's genius lingers, are out of the reach of "improvements," and are indestructible even by machinery.

If it be objected that several of the places which we try to identify—and which some would prefer to leave for ever undisturbed in the realm of imagination—were purposely left obscure, it may be replied that Death and Time have probably now removed all reasons for reticence, especially in the case of those poems referring to domestic life and friendly ties. While an author is alive, or while those are alive to whom he has made reference in the course of his allusions to place, it may even be right that works designed for posterity should not be dealt with after the fashion of the modern "interviewer." But greatness has its penalties; and a "fierce light" "beats around the throne" of Genius, as well as round that of Empire. Moreover, all experience shows that posterity takes a great and a growing interest in exact topographical illustrations of the works of great authors. The labour recently bestowed upon the places connected with Shakespeare, Scott, and Burns sufficiently attests this.

The localities in Westmoreland, which are most permanently associated with Wordsworth, are these: Grasmere, where he lived during the years of his "poetic prime," and where he is buried; Lower Easdale, where he passed so many days with his sister by the side of the brook, and on the terraces at Lancrigg, and where *The Prelude* was dictated; Rydal Mount, where he spent the latter half of his life, and where he found one of the most perfect retreats in England; Great Langdale, and Blea Tarn at the head of Little Langdale, immortalised in *The Excursion;* the upper end of Ullswater, and Kirkstone Pass; and all the mountain tracks and paths round Grasmere and Rydal, especially the old upper road between them, under Nab Scar, his favourite walk

during his later years, where he "composed hundreds of verses." There is scarcely a rock or mountain summit, a stream or tarn, or even a well, a grove, or forest-side in all that neighbourhood, which is not imperishably identified with this poet, who at once interpreted them as they had never been interpreted before, and added

> the gleam,
> The light that never was, on sea or land,
> The consecration, and the Poet's dream.

It may be worthy of note that Wordsworth himself sanctioned the principle of tracing out local allusions both by dictating the Fenwick notes, and by republishing his Essay on the topography of the Lakes, along with the Duddon Sonnets, in 1820—and also, by itself, in 1822—"from a belief that it would tend materially to illustrate" his poems.

In this edition the topographical Notes usually follow the Poems to which they refer. But in the case of the longer Poems, such as *The Prelude*, *The Excursion*, and others, it seems more convenient to print them at the foot of the page, than to oblige the reader to turn to the end of the volume.

From the accident of my having tried long ago—at Principal Shairp's request—to do what he told me he wished to do, but had failed to carry out, I have been supposed, quite erroneously, to be an *authority* on the subject of "The English Lake District, as interpreted in the Poems of Wordsworth." The latter, it is true, is the title of one of the books which I have written about Wordsworth: but, although I visited the Lakes in 1860,—"as a pilgrim resolute"—and have re-visited the district nearly every year for more than a quarter of a century, I may say that I have only a partial knowledge of it. Others,

such as Canon Rawnsley, Mr. Harry Goodwin, and Mr. Rix, for example, know many parts of it much better than I do; but, as I have often had to compare my own judgment with that of such experts as the late Dr. Cradock, Principal of Brasenose College, Oxford, and others, I may add that, when I differ from them, it has been only after a re-examination of their evidence, at the localities themselves.

Sixth. Several Poems, and fragments of poems, hitherto unpublished—or published in stray quarters, and in desultory fashion—will find a place in this edition; but I reserve these fragments, and place them all together, in an Appendix to the last volume of the "Poetical Works." If it is desirable to print these poems, in such an edition as this, it is equally desirable to separate them from those which Wordsworth himself sanctioned in his final edition of 1849-50.

Every great author in the Literature of the World—whether he lives to old age (when his judgment may possibly be less critical) or dies young (when it may be relatively more accurate)—should himself determine what portions of his work ought, and what ought not to survive. At the same time, —while I do not presume to judge in the case of writers whom I know less fully than I happen to know Wordsworth and his contemporaries,—it seems clear that the very greatest men have occasionally erred as to what parts of their writings might, with most advantage, survive; and that they have even more frequently erred as to what MS. letters, etc., —casting light on their contemporaries—should, or should not, be preserved. I am convinced, for example, that if the Wordsworth household had not

destroyed all the letters which Coleridge sent to them, in the first decade of this century, the world would now possess much important knowledge which is for ever lost. It may have been wise, for reasons now unknown, to burn those letters, written by Coleridge: but the students of the literature of the period would gladly have them now.

Passing from the question of the preservation of Letters, it is evident that Wordsworth was very careful in distinguishing between the Verses which he sent to Newspapers and Magazines, and those Poems which he included in his published volumes. His anxiety on this point may be inferred from the way in which he more than once emphasised the fact of republication, *e.g.* in *Peter Bell* (1819) he put the following prefatory note to four sonnets, which had previously appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*, and which afterwards (1828) appeared in the *Poetical Album* of Alaric Watts, "The following Sonnets having lately appeared in Periodical Publications are here reprinted."

Some of the poems (or fragments of poems), included in the *addenda* to Volume VIII. of this edition, I would willingly have left out (especially the sonnet addressed to Miss Maria Williams); but, since they have appeared elsewhere, I feel justified in now reprinting even that trivial youthful effusion, signed "Axiologus." I rejoice, however, that there is no likelihood that the "Somersetshire Tragedy" will ever see the light. When I told Wordsworth's successor in the Laureateship that I had burned a copy of that poem, sent to me by one to whom it had been confided, his delight was great. It is the chronicle of a revolting crime, with nothing in the verse to warrant its publication. The only

curious thing about it is that Wordsworth wrote it. With this exception, there is no reason why the fragments which he did not himself republish, and others which he published but afterwards suppressed, should not now be printed. The suppression of some of these by the poet himself is as unaccountable, as is his omission of certain stanzas in the earlier poems from their later versions. Even the Cambridge *Installation Ode*, which is so feeble, will be reprinted.[1] *The Glowworm*, which only appeared in the edition of 1807, will be republished in full. *Andrew Jones*,—also suppressed after appearing in "Lyrical Ballads" of 1800, 1802, and 1805,—will be replaced, in like manner. The youthful *School Exercise* written at Hawkshead, the translation from the *Georgics* of Virgil, the poem addressed *To the Queen* in 1846, will appear in their chronological place in vol. viii. There are also a translation of some French stanzas by Francis Wrangham on *The Birth of Love*—a poem entitled *The Eagle and the Dove*, which was privately printed in a volume, consisting chiefly of French fragments, and called *La petite Chouannerie, ou Historie d'un College Breton sous l'Empire*—a sonnet on the rebuilding of a church at Cardiff—an Election Squib written during the Lowther and Brougham contest for the representation of the county of Cumberland in 1818—some stanzas written in the Visitors' Book at the Ferry, Windermere, and other fragments. Then, since Wordsworth published some verses by his sister Dorothy in his own volumes, other

[1] How much of this poem was Wordsworth's own has not been definitely ascertained. I am of opinion that very little, if any of it, was his. It has been said that his nephew, the late Bishop of Lincoln, wrote most of it; but more recent evidence tends to show that it was the work of his son-in-law, Edward Quillinan.

unpublished fragments by Miss Wordsworth may find a place in this edition. I do not attach much importance, however, to the recovery of these unpublished poems. The truth is, as Sir Henry Taylor—himself a poet and critic of no mean order—remarked,[1] "In these days, when a great man's path to posterity is likely to be more and more crowded, there is a tendency to create an obstruction, in the desire to give an impulse. To gather about a man's work all the details that can be found out about it is, in my opinion, to put a drag upon it; and, as of the Works, so of the Life." The industrious labour of some editors in disinterring the trivial works of great men is not a commendable industry. All great writers have occasionally written trifles—this is true even of Shakespeare—and if they wished them to perish, why should we seek to resuscitate them? Besides, this labour—whether due to the industry of admiring friends, or to the ambition of the literary resurrectionist—is futile; because the verdict of Time is sure, and posterity is certain to consign the recovered trivialities to kindly oblivion. The question which should invariably present itself to the editor of the fragments of a great writer is, "*Can these bones live?*" If they cannot, they had better never see the light. Indeed the only good reason for reprinting the fragments which have been lost (because the author himself attached no value to them), is that, in a complete collection of the works of a great man, some of them may have a biographic or psychological value. But have we any right to reproduce, from an antiquarian motive, what—in a literary sense—is either trivial, or feeble, or sterile?

[1] In a letter to the writer in 1882.

We must, however, distinguish between what is suitable for an edition meant either to popularise an author, or to interpret him, and an edition intended to bring together all that is worthy of preservation for posterity. There is great truth in what Mr. Arnold has lately said of Byron: "I question whether by reading everything which he gives us, we are so likely to acquire an admiring sense, even of his variety and abundance, as by reading what he gives us at his happier moments. Receive him absolutely without omission and compromise, follow his whole outpouring, stanza by stanza, and line by line, from the very commencement to the very end, and he is capable of being tiresome."[1] This is quite true; nevertheless, English literature demands a complete edition of all the works of Byron: and it may be safely predicted that, for weightier reasons and with greater urgency, it will continue to call for the collected works of Wordsworth.

It should also be noted that the fact of Wordsworth's having dictated to Miss Fenwick (so late as 1843) a stanza from *The Convict* in his note to *The Lament of Mary Queen of Scots* (1817), justifies the inclusion of the whole of that (suppressed) poem in such an edition as this.

The fact that Wordsworth did not republish all his Poems, in his final edition of 1849-50, is not conclusive evidence that he thought them unworthy of preservation, and reproduction. It must be remembered that *The Prelude* itself was a posthumous publication; and also that the fragmentary canto of

[1] *The Poetry of Byron, chosen and arranged by Matthew Arnold.* London: Macmillan and Co.

The Recluse, entitled "Home at Grasmere"—as well as the other canto published in 1886, and entitled (most prosaically) "Composed when a probability existed of our being obliged to quit Rydal Mount as a residence"—were not published by the poet himself. I am of opinion that his omission of the stanzas beginning—

Among all lovely things my Love had been,

and of the sonnet on his *Voyage down the Rhine*, was due to sheer forgetfulness of their existence. Few poets remember all their past, fugitive, productions. At the same time, there are other fragments,—written when he was experimenting with his theme, and when the inspiration of genius had forsaken him,—which it is unfortunate that he did not himself destroy.

Among the Poems which Wordsworth suppressed, in his final edition, is the Latin translation of *The Somnambulist* by his son. This will be republished, more especially as it was included by Wordsworth himself in the second edition of his "Yarrow Revisited."

It may be well to mention the *repetitions* which are inevitable in this edition. (1) As already explained, those fragments of *The Recluse*—which were issued in all the earlier volumes, and afterwards incorporated in *The Prelude*—are printed as they originally appeared. (2) Short Notes are extracted from Dorothy Wordsworth's *Recollections of a Tour made in Scotland* (1803), which illustrate the Poems composed during that Tour, while the whole text of that Tour will be printed in full in subsequent volumes. (3) Other fragments, including the lines beginning,

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe,

will be printed both by themselves in their chronological place, and in the longer poem of which they form a part, according to the original plan of their author.

A detail, perhaps not too trivial to mention, is that, in this edition—at the suggestion of several friends—I have followed the example of Professor Dowden in his Aldine edition, and numbered the lines of almost all the poems—even the sonnets. When I have not done so, the reason will be obvious; viz. either the structure, or the brevity, of the poem.[1]

In giving the date of each poem, I have used the word "composed," rather than "written," very much because Wordsworth himself,—and his sister, in her Journals—almost invariably use the word "composed"; although he criticised the term as applied to the creation of a poem, as if it were a manufactured article. In his Chronological Table, Mr. Dowden adopts the word "composed"; but, in his edition of the Poems, he has made use of the term "written."[2]

No notice (or almost none) of misprints in Wordsworth's own text is taken, in the notes to this edition. Sometimes an error occurred, and was carried on through more than one edition, and corrected in the next: *e.g.*, in *The Childless Father*, the editions of 1827, 1832, and 1836 have the line—

> Fresh springs of green boxwood, not six months before.

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[1] It may not be too trivial a fact to mention that Wordsworth numbered the lines of his earliest publication, *An Evening Walk*, in 1793.—Ed.

[2] Another fact, not too trivial to mention, is that in the original MS. of the *Lines composed at Grasmere*, etc., Wordsworth sent it to the printer "Lines written," but changed it in proof to "Lines composed."—Ed.

In the *errata* of the edition of 1836 this is corrected to "fresh sprigs." There are other *errata*, which remained in the edition of 1849-50, *e.g.*, in *Rob Roy's Grave*, "Vools" for "Veols," and mistakes in quotations from other poets, such as "invention" for "instruction," in Wither's poem on the Daisy. These are corrected without mention.

I should perhaps add that, while I have included, amongst the illustrative notes, extracts from Henry Crabb Robinson's *Diary*, etc., many of them are now published for the first time. These voluminous MSS. of Robinson's have been re-examined with care; and the reader who compares the three volumes of the *Diary*, etc.—edited by Dr. Sadler—with the extracts now printed from the original MS., will see where sentences omitted by the original editor have been included.

As this edition proceeds, my debt to many—who have been so kind as to put their Wordsworth MSS. and memoranda at my disposal—will be apparent.

It is difficult to acknowledge duly my obligation to collectors of autograph Letters—Mr. Morrison, the late Mr. Locker Lampson, the late Mr. Mackay, of the Grange, Trowbridge, and a score of others—but, I may say in general, that the kindness of those who possess Wordsworth MSS. in allowing me to examine them, has been a very genuine evidence of their interest in the Poet, and his work.

My special thanks are due to Mr. Gordon Wordsworth, who has, in the kindest manner and for many years, placed everything at my disposal, which could further my labour on his grandfather's Works.

Finally, I wish to express the great debt I owe to the late Mr. J. Dykes Campbell, for many suggestions, and for his unwearied interest in this work,—which I think was second only to his interest in

Coleridge—and also to Mr. W. B. Kinghorn for his valuable assistance in the revision of proof sheets.

If there are any desiderata, in reference to Wordsworth—in addition to a new Life, a critical Essay, and such a Bibliography of Criticism as will be adequate for posterity—a *Concordance* to his works is one of them. A correspondent once offered to prepare this for me, if I found a publisher: and another has undertaken to compile a volume of *parallel passages* from the earlier poets of England, and of the world. A Concordance might very well form part of a volume of *Wordsworthiana*, and be a real service to future students of the poet.

WILLIAM KNIGHT.

WORDSWORTH'S POETICAL WORKS

EXTRACT

FROM THE CONCLUSION OF A POEM, COMPOSED IN ANTICIPATION OF LEAVING SCHOOL

Composed 1786.—Published 1815

THIS poem was placed by Wordsworth among his "Juvenile Pieces." The following note was prefixed to that Series, from 1820 to 1832 :—

"Of the Poems in this class, "THE EVENING WALK" and "DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES" were first published in 1793. They are reprinted with some unimportant alterations that were chiefly made very soon after their publication. It would have been easy to amend them, in many passages, both as to sentiment and expression, and I have not been altogether able to resist the temptation : but attempts of this kind are made at the risk of injuring those characteristic features, which, after all, will be regarded as the principal recommendation of juvenile poems."

In 1836 "unimportant" was erased before "alterations"; and after "temptation" the following was added, "as will be obvious to the attentive reader, in some instances : these are few, for I am aware that attempts of this kind," etc.

. . . . .

"The above, which was written some time ago, scarcely applies to the Poem, *Descriptive Sketches*, as it now stands. The corrections, though numerous, are not, however, such as to prevent its retaining with propriety a place in the class of 'Juvenile Pieces.'"

In the editions of 1845 and 1849, Wordsworth called his "Juvenile Pieces," "Poems written in Youth."—ED.

["Dear native regions," etc., 1786. Hawkshead. The beautiful image with which this poem concludes suggested itself to me while I was resting in a boat along with my companions under the shade of a magnificent row of sycamores, which then extended their branches from the shore of the promontory upon which stands the ancient, and at that time the more picturesque, Hall of Coniston, the Seat of the Le Flemings from very early times. The Poem of which it was the conclusion, was of many hundred lines, and contained thoughts and images, most of which have been dispersed through my other writings.—I. F.]

In the editions 1815 to 1832, the title given to this poem was *Extract from the conclusion of a Poem, composed upon leaving School.* The row of sycamores at Hawkshead, referred to in the Fenwick note, no longer exists.

In the "Autobiographical Memoranda," dictated by Wordsworth at Rydal Mount in November 1847, he says, ". . . . I wrote, while yet a schoolboy, a long poem running upon my own adventures, and the scenery of the county in which I was brought up. The only part of that poem which has been preserved is the conclusion of it, which stands at the beginning of my collected Poems."*

In the eighth book of *The Prelude*, (lines 468–475), this fragment is introduced, and there Wordsworth tells us that once, when boating on Coniston Lake (Thurston-mere) in his boyhood, he entered under a grove of trees on its "western marge," and glided "along the line of low-roofed water," "as in a cloister." He adds,

while, in that shade
Loitering, I watched the golden beams of light
Flung from the setting sun, as they reposed
In silent beauty on the naked ridge
Of a high eastern hill—thus flowed my thoughts
In a pure stream of words fresh from the heart:

ED.

DEAR native regions,† I foretell,
From what I feel at this farewell,
That, wheresoe'er my steps may [1] tend,
And whensoe'er my course shall end,

[1] 1832.
. . . . shall . 1815.

* See the *Memoirs of William Wordsworth*, by Christopher Wordsworth (1851), vol. i. pp. 10-31.—ED.

† Compare the *Ode, composed in January* 1816, stanza v.—ED.

If in that hour a single tie[1]
Survive of local sympathy,
My soul will cast the backward view,
The longing look alone on you.

Thus, while the Sun sinks down to rest
Far in the regions of the west,
Though to the vale no parting beam
Be given, not one memorial gleam,[2]
A lingering light he fondly throws[3]
On the dear hills[4] where first he rose.

WRITTEN IN VERY EARLY YOUTH

Composed 1786.*—Published 1807†

From 1807 to 1843 this was placed by Wordsworth in his group of "Miscellaneous Sonnets." In 1845, it was transferred to the class of "Poems written in Youth." It is doubtful if it was really written in "*very* early youth." Its final form, at any rate, may belong to a later period.—ED.

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[1] 1815.

That, when the close of life draws near,
And I must quit this earthly sphere,
If in that hour a tender tie — MS.

[2] 1845.

Thus, when the Sun, prepared for rest,
Hath gained the precincts of the West,
Though his departing radiance fail
To illuminate the hollow Vale, — 1815.

Thus, from the precincts of the West,
The Sun, when sinking down to rest, — 1832.

. . while sinking . . . — 1836.

Hath reached the precincts . . . — MS.

[3] 1815.

A lingering lustre fondly throws — 1832.

The edition of 1845 reverts to the reading of 1815.

[4] 1815.

On the dear mountain-tops . . . — 1820.

The edition of 1845 returns to the text of 1815.

---

* The date of the composition of this fragment is quite unknown.—ED.

† But previously, in *The Morning Post*, Feb. 13, 1802.—ED.

CALM is all nature as a resting wheel.
The kine are couched upon the dewy grass;
The horse alone, seen dimly as I pass,
Is cropping audibly[1] his later meal:*
Dark is the ground; a slumber seems to steal
O'er vale, and mountain, and the starless sky.
Now, in this blank of things, a harmony,
Home-felt, and home-created, comes[2] to heal
That grief for which the senses still supply
Fresh food; for only then, when memory
Is hushed, am I at rest. My Friends! restrain
Those busy cares that would allay my pain;
Oh! leave me to myself, nor let me feel
The officious touch that makes me droop again.

AN EVENING WALK

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG LADY

Composed 1787-9.†—Published 1793

[The young Lady to whom this was addressed was my Sister. It was composed at School, and during my first two College vacations. There is not an image in it which I have not observed; and, now in my seventy-third year, I recollect the time and place, when most of them were noticed. I will confine myself to one instance:

> Waving his hat, the shepherd, from the vale,
> Directs his winding dog the cliffs to scale,—
> The dog, loud barking, 'mid the glittering rocks,
> Hunts, where his master points, the intercepted flocks.

---

[1] 1827.
Is up, and cropping yet . . . 1807.

[2] 1838.
. . . . . . seems . . 1807.

---

* Canon Ainger calls attention to the fact that there is here a parallel, possibly "a reminiscence, from the *Nocturnal Reverie* of the Countess of Winchelsea.

> Whose stealing pace and lengthened shade we fear,
> Till torn-up forage in his teeth we hear.—ED.

† See note to the "Juvenile Pieces" in the edition of 1836 (p. 1).—ED.

I was an eye-witness of this for the first time while crossing the Pass of Dunmail Raise. Upon second thought, I will mention another image:

> And, fronting the bright west, yon oak entwines
> Its darkening boughs and leaves, in stronger lines.

This is feebly and imperfectly expressed, but I recollect distinctly the very spot where this first struck me. It was on the way between Hawkshead and Ambleside, and gave me extreme pleasure. The moment was important in my poetical history; for I date from it my consciousness of the infinite variety of natural appearances which had been unnoticed by the poets of any age or country, so far as I was acquainted with them; and I made a resolution to supply in some degree the deficiency. I could not have been at that time above fourteen years of age. The description of the swans, that follows, was taken from the daily opportunities I had of observing their habits, not as confined to the gentleman's park, but in a state of nature. There were two pairs of them that divided the lake of Esthwaite, and its in-and-out flowing streams, between them, never trespassing a single yard upon each other's separate domain. They were of the old magnificent species, bearing in beauty and majesty about the same relation to the Thames swan which that does to the goose. It was from the remembrance of those noble creatures, I took, thirty years after, the picture of the swan which I have discarded from the poem of *Dion*.* While I was a schoolboy, the late Mr. Curwen introduced a little fleet of these birds, but of the inferior species, to the lake of Windermere. Their principal home was about his own island; but they sailed about into remote parts of the lake, and either from real or imagined injury done to the adjoining fields, they were got rid of at the request of the farmers and proprietors, but to the great regret of all who had become attached to them from noticing their beauty and quiet habits. I will conclude my notice of this poem by observing that the plan of it has not been confined to a particular walk, or an individual place; a proof (of which I was unconscious at the time) of my unwillingness to submit the poetic spirit to the chains of fact and real circumstance. The country is idealised rather than described in any one of its local aspects.—I. F.]

* It may not be irrelevant to mention that our late poet, Robert Browning, besought me—both in conversation, and by letter—to restore this "discarded" picture, in editing *Dion*.—Ed.

The title of this poem, as first published in 1793, was *An Evening Walk. An epistle; in verse. Addressed to a Young Lady, from the Lakes of the North of England. By W. Wordsworth, B.A., of St. John's, Cambridge.* Extracts from it were published in all the collected editions of the poems under the general title of "Juvenile Pieces," from 1815 to 1843; and, in 1845 and 1849, of "Poems written in Youth." The following prefatory note to the "Juvenile Pieces" occurs in the editions 1820 to 1832. "They are reprinted with some unimportant alterations that were chiefly made very soon after their publication. It would have been easy to amend them, in many passages, both as to sentiment and expression, and I have not been altogether able to resist the temptation: but attempts of this kind are made at the risk of injuring those characteristic features, which, after all, will be regarded as the principal recommendation of juvenile poems." To this, Wordsworth added, in 1836, "The above, which was written some time ago, scarcely applies to the Poem, *Descriptive Sketches*, as it now stands. The corrections, though numerous, are not, however, such as to prevent its retaining with propriety a place in the class of 'Juvenile Pieces.'" In May 1794 Wordsworth wrote to his friend Mathews, "It was with great reluctance that I sent these two little works into the world in so imperfect a state. But as I had done nothing at the University, I thought these little things might show that I *could* do something."

Wordsworth's notes to this poem are printed from the edition of 1793. Slight variations in the text of these notes in subsequent editions, in the spelling of proper names, and in punctuation, are not noted.—Ed.

General Sketch of the Lakes—Author's regret of his Youth which was passed amongst them—Short description of Noon—Cascade—Noon-tide Retreat—Precipice and sloping Lights—Face of Nature as the Sun declines—Mountain-farm, and the Cock—Slate-quarry—Sunset—Superstition of the Country connected with that moment—Swans—Female Beggar—Twilight-sounds—Western Lights—Spirits—Night—Moonlight—Hope—Night-sounds—Conclusion.

FAR from my dearest Friend, 'tis mine to rove
Through bare grey dell, high wood, and pastoral cove;
Where Derwent rests, and listens to the roar

That stuns the tremulous cliffs of high Lodore ;[1]
Where peace to Grasmere's lonely island leads,
To willowy hedge-rows, and to emerald meads ;
Leads to her bridge, rude church, and cottaged grounds,
Her rocky sheepwalks, and her woodland bounds ;
Where, undisturbed by winds, Winander * sleeps [2]
'Mid clustering isles, and holly-sprinkled steeps ;
Where twilight glens endear my Esthwaite's shore,
And memory of departed pleasures, more.

Fair scenes, erewhile, I taught, a happy child,
The echoes of your rocks my carols wild :
The spirit sought not then, in cherished sadness,
A cloudy substitute for failing gladness.[3]
In youth's keen [4] eye the livelong day was bright,
The sun at morning, and the stars at night,

---

[1] 1836.

His wizard course where hoary Derwent takes
Thro' craggs, and forest glooms, and opening lakes,
Staying his silent waves, to hear the roar
That stuns the tremulous cliffs of high Lodore :
Where silver rocks the savage prospect chear
Of giant yews that frown on Rydale's mere ; 1793.

Where Derwent stops his course to hear the roar
That stuns the tremulous cliffs . . . 1827.
(Omitting two lines of the 1793 text quoted above.)

[2] 1836.

Where, bosom'd deep, the shy Winander peeps 1793.
Where, deep embosom'd, shy Winander peeps 1827.

[3] 1836.

Fair scenes ! with other eyes, than once, I gaze,
The ever-varying charm your round displays,
Than when, ere-while, I taught, "a happy child,"
The echoes of your rocks my carols wild :
Then did no ebb of chearfulness demand
Sad tides of joy from Melancholy's hand ; 1793.

Upon the varying charm your round displays, 1820.

[4] 1820.

. . wild . . . . 1793.

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* These lines are only applicable to the middle part of that lake.—W. W. 1793.

Alike, when first the bittern's hollow bill
Was heard, or woodcocks * roamed the moonlight hill.[1]

In thoughtless gaiety I coursed the plain,[2]
And hope itself was all I knew of pain;
For then, the inexperienced heart would beat [3]
At times, while young Content forsook her seat,
And wild Impatience, pointing upward, showed,
Through passes yet unreached, a brighter road.[4]
Alas! the idle tale of man is found
Depicted in the dial's moral round;
Hope with reflection blends her social rays [5]
To gild the total tablet of his days;
Yet still, the sport of some malignant power,
He knows but from its shade the present hour.
[6]

---

[1] 1836.

. . . . . . stars of night,
Alike, when first the vales the bittern fills,
Or the first woodcocks roam'd the moonlight hills. 1793.
Alike, when heard the bittern's hollow bill,
Or the first woodcocks roam'd the moonlight hill. 1820.

[2] 1820.

Return Delights! with whom my road begun,
When Life rear'd laughing up her morning sun;
When Transport kiss'd away my april tear,
"Rocking as in a dream the tedious year";
When link'd with thoughtless Mirth I cours'd the plain,
1793.

[3] 1836.

For then, ev'n then, the little heart would beat 1793.

[4] 1836.

And wild Impatience, panting upward, show'd
Where tipp'd with gold the mountain-summits glow'd.
1793.

[5] 1836.

With Hope Reflexion blends her social rays 1793.

[6] 1820.

While, Memory at my side, I wander here,
Starts at the simplest sight th' unbidden tear,
A form discover'd at the well-known seat,
A spot, that angles at the riv'let's feet,

---

* In the beginning of winter, these mountains, in the moonlight nights, are covered with immense quantities of woodcocks; which, in the dark nights, retire into the woods.—W. W. 1793.

But why, ungrateful, dwell on idle pain?
To show what pleasures yet to me remain,[1]
Say, will my Friend, with unreluctant ear,[2]
The history of a poet's evening hear?

When, in the south, the wan noon, brooding still,
Breathed a pale steam around the glaring hill,
And shades of deep-embattled clouds were seen,
Spotting the northern cliffs with lights between;
When crowding cattle, checked by rails that make
A fence far stretched into the shallow lake,
Lashed the cool water with their restless tails,
Or from high points of rock looked out for fanning gales;[3]
When school-boys stretched their length upon the green;
And round the broad-spread oak, a glimmering scene,
In the rough fern-clad park, the herded deer[4]
Shook the still-twinkling tail and glancing ear;
When horses in the sunburnt intake* stood,

The ray the cot of morning trav'ling nigh,
And sail that glides the well-known alders by.
Only in the edition of 1793.

[1] 1820.
To shew her yet some joys to me remain, 1793.

[2] 1820.
. . . . with soft affection's ear, 1793.

[3] 1836.
. . . . with lights between;
Gazing the tempting shades to them deny'd,
When stood the shorten'd herds amid' the tide,
Where, from the barren wall's unshelter'd end,
Long rails into the shallow lake extend; 1793.

When, at the barren wall's unsheltered end,
Where long rails far into the lake extend,
Crowded the shortened herds, and beat the tides
With their quick tails, and lash'd their speckled sides; 1820.

[4] 1836.
And round the humming elm, a glimmering scene!
In the brown park, in flocks, the troubl'd deer 1793.
. . . . in herds, . . . 1820.

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* The word *intake* is local, and signifies a mountain-inclosure.—W. W. 1793.

And vainly eyed below the tempting flood,
Or tracked the passenger, in mute distress,
With forward neck the closing gate to press—[1]
Then, while I wandered where the huddling rill
Brightens with water-breaks the hollow ghyll * [2]
As by enchantment, an obscure retreat[3]
Opened at once, and stayed my devious feet.
While thick above the rill the branches close,
In rocky basin its wild waves repose,

---

[1] 1820.

When horses in the wall-girt intake stood,
Unshaded, eying far below, the flood,
Crouded behind the swain, in mute distress,
With forward neck the closing gate to press;
And long, with wistful gaze, his walk survey'd,
'Till dipp'd his pathway in the river shade; 1793.

[2] 1845.

—Then Quiet led me up the huddling rill,
Bright'ning with water-breaks the sombrous gill; 1793.

—Then, while I wandered up the huddling rill
Brightening with water-breaks the sombrous ghyll, 1820.

Then, while I wandered where the huddling rill
Brightens with water-breaks the sombrous ghyll, 1836.

[3] 1820.

To where, while thick above the branches close,
In dark-brown bason its wild waves repose,
Inverted shrubs, and moss of darkest green,
Cling from the rocks, with pale wood-weeds between;
Save that, atop, the subtle sunbeams shine,
On wither'd briars that o'er the craggs recline;
Sole light admitted here, a small cascade,
Illumes with sparkling foam the twilight shade.
Beyond, along the visto of the brook,
Where antique roots its bustling path o'erlook,
The eye reposes on a secret bridge
Half grey, half shagg'd with ivy to its ridge.
—Sweet rill, farewel! . . . . 1793.

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* Gill is also, I believe, a term confined to this country. Glen, gill, and dingle, have the same meaning.—W. W. 1793.

The spelling "Ghyll" is first used in the edition of 1820 in the text. In the note to that edition it remains "gill." In 1827 the spelling in the note was "ghyll."—Ed.

Inverted shrubs,* and moss of gloomy green,
Cling from the rocks, with pale wood-weeds between;
And its own twilight softens the whole scene,†
Save where aloft the subtle sunbeams shine
On withered briars that o'er the crags recline;[1]
Save where, with sparkling foam, a small cascade,
Illumines, from within, the leafy shade;[2]
Beyond, along the vista of the brook,
Where antique roots its bustling course[3] o'erlook,
The eye reposes on a secret bridge ‡
Half grey, half shagged with ivy to its ridge;

---

[1] 1845.

But see aloft the subtle sunbeams shine,
On withered briars that o'er the crags recline;
Thus beautiful! as if the sight displayed,
By its own sparkling foam that small cascade;
Inverted shrubs, with moss of gloomy green
Cling from the rocks, with pale wood-weeds between. C.

Inverted shrubs with pale wood weeds between
Cling from the moss-grown rocks, a darksome green,
Save where aloft the subtle sunbeams shine
And its own twilight softens the whole scene.
And sparkling as it foams a small cascade
Illumines from within the impervious shade
Below, right in the vista of the brook,
Where antique roots, etc. MS.

[2] 1845.

Sole light admitted here, a small cascade,
Illumes with sparkling foam the impervious shade; 1820.

[3] 1827.

. . . . . . path . . 1793.

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* Compare Dr. John Brown—

Not a passing breeze
Sigh'd to the grove, which in the midnight air
Stood motionless, and in the peaceful floods
Inverted hung.

and see note * to page 31.—Ed.

† This line was first inserted in the edition of 1845. In the following line, the edition of 1793 has

Save that, atop, the subtle . . .

Subsequent editions previous to 1845 have

Save that aloft . . . . Ed.

‡ The reader, who has made the tour of this country, will recognize, in this description, the features which characterize the lower waterfall in the gardens of Rydale.—W. W. 1793.

There, bending o'er the stream, the listless swain
Lingers behind his disappearing wain.[1]
—Did Sabine grace adorn my living line,
Blandusia's praise, wild stream, should yield to thine!
Never shall ruthless minister of death
'Mid thy soft glooms the glittering steel unsheath;
No goblets shall, for thee, be crowned with flowers,
No kid with piteous outcry thrill thy bowers;
The mystic shapes that by thy margin rove
A more benignant sacrifice approve—
A mind, that, in a calm angelic mood
Of happy wisdom, meditating good,
Beholds, of all from her high powers required,
Much done, and much designed, and more desired,—
Harmonious thoughts, a soul by truth refined,
Entire affection for all human kind.

Dear Brook,[2] farewell! To-morrow's noon again
Shall hide me, wooing long thy wildwood strain;
But now the sun has gained his western road,
And eve's mild hour invites my steps abroad.

While, near the midway cliff, the silvered kite
In many a whistling circle wheels her flight;
Slant watery lights, from parting clouds, apace
Travel along the precipice's base;
Cheering its naked waste of scattered stone,
By lichens grey, and scanty moss, o'ergrown;
Where scarce the foxglove peeps, or[3] thistle's beard;
And restless[4] stone-chat, all day long, is heard.

---

[1] 1845.
Whence hangs, in the cool shade, the listless swain
Lingering behind his disappearing wain. 1820.

[2] 1845.
—Sweet rill, ... 1793.

[3] 1820.
. . . . and . . 1793.

[4] 1845.
And desert . . . . 1793.

How pleasant, as the sun declines, to view[1]
The spacious landscape change in form and hue!
Here, vanish, as in mist, before a flood
Of bright obscurity, hill, lawn, and wood;
There, objects, by the searching beams betrayed,
Come forth, and here retire in purple shade;
Even the white stems of birch, the cottage white,
Soften their glare before the mellow light;
The skiffs, at anchor where with umbrage wide
Yon chestnuts half the latticed boat-house hide,
Shed from their sides, that face the sun's slant beam,
Strong flakes of radiance on the tremulous stream:
Raised by yon travelling flock, a dusty cloud
Mounts from the road, and spreads its moving shroud;
The shepherd, all involved in wreaths of fire,
Now shows a shadowy speck, and now is lost entire.

Into a gradual calm the breezes[2] sink,[3]
A blue rim borders all the lake's still brink;
There doth the twinkling aspen's foliage sleep,
And insects clothe, like dust, the glassy deep:[4]

---

[1] 1820.

How pleasant, as the yellowing sun declines,
And with long rays and shades the landscape shines;
To mark the birches' stems all golden light,
That lit the dark slant woods with silvery white!
The willow's weeping trees, that twinkling hoar,
Glanc'd oft upturn'd along the breezy shore,
Low bending o'er the colour'd water, fold
Their moveless boughs and leaves like threads of gold;
The skiffs with naked masts at anchor laid,
Before the boat-house peeping thro' the shade;
Th' unwearied glance of woodman's echo'd stroke;
And curling from the trees the cottage smoke.
Their pannier'd train . . . . 1793.

[2] 1845.

. . . . . . zephyrs . 1820.

[3] This stanza was added in the edition of 1820.

[4] 1845.

This couplet was added in 1845.

And now, on every side, the surface breaks
Into blue spots, and slowly lengthening streaks;
Here, plots of sparkling water tremble bright
With thousand thousand twinkling points of light;
There, waves that, hardly weltering, die away,
Tip their smooth ridges with a softer ray;
And now the whole wide lake in deep repose
Is hushed, and like a burnished mirror glows,[1]
Save where, along the shady western marge,
Coasts, with industrious oar, the charcoal barge.[2]

Their panniered train a group of potters goad,
Winding from side to side up the steep road;
The peasant, from yon cliff of fearful edge
Shot, down the headlong path darts with his sledge;[3]
Bright beams the lonely mountain-horse illume
Feeding 'mid purple heath, "green rings," * and broom;
While the sharp slope the slackened team confounds,
Downward † the ponderous timber-wain resounds;
[4] In foamy breaks the rill, with merry song,

[1] 1845.
And now the universal tides repose,
And, brightly blue, the burnished mirror glows, 1820.

[2] 1845.
The sails are dropped, the poplar's foliage sleeps,
And insects clothe, like dust, the glassy deeps.
This couplet followed l. 127 from 1820 to 1843.

[3] 1820.
Shot, down the headlong pathway darts his sledge; 1793.

[4] 1820.
Beside their sheltering ‡ cross of wall, the flock
Feeds on in light, nor thinks of winter's shock;
Only in the edition of 1793.

* "Vivid rings of green."—Greenwood's Poem on Shooting.—W. W. 1793. The title is *A Poem written during a Shooting Excursion on the Moors.* It was published by Cruttwell at Bath in 1787, 4to, pp. 25. The quotation is from stanza xvi., l. 11.—Ed.

† "Down the rough slope the pondrous waggon rings."—Beattie.—W. W. 1793. See *The Minstrel*, stanza xxxix., l. 4.—Ed.

‡ These rude structures, to protect the flocks, are frequent in this country: the traveller may recollect one in Withburne, another upon Whinlatter. —W. W. 1793.

Dashed o'er [1] the rough rock, lightly leaps along;
From lonesome chapel at the mountain's feet,
Three humble bells their rustic chime repeat;
Sounds from the water-side the hammered boat;
And *blasted* quarry thunders, heard remote!

Even here, amid the sweep of endless woods,
Blue pomp of lakes, high cliffs and falling floods,
Not undelightful are the simplest charms,
Found by the grassy [2] door of mountain-farms.

Sweetly ferocious,* round his native walks,
Pride of [3] his sister-wives, the monarch stalks;
Spur-clad his nervous feet, and firm his tread;
A crest of purple tops the warrior's head.[4]
Bright sparks his black and rolling [5] eye-ball hurls
Afar, his tail he closes and unfurls;
[6] On tiptoe reared, he strains [7] his clarion throat,
Threatened by faintly-answering farms remote:
Again with his shrill voice the mountain rings,
While, flapped with conscious pride, resound his wings! [8]

[1] 1820.
Dashed down . . . . 1793.

[2] 1836.
. . . verdant . . . . . 1793.

[3] 1820.
Gazed by . . . . 1793.

[4] 1836.
. . . . his warrior head. 1793.

[5] 1836.
. . . . . haggard . . . . 1793.

[6] 1836.
Whose state, like pine-trees, waving to and fro,
Droops, and o'er canopies his regal brow,
This couplet was inserted in the editions 1793 to 1832.

[7] 1820.
. . . . . blows . . . . 1793.

[8] This couplet was first printed in the edition of 1820.

* "Dolcemente feroce."—TASSO. In this description of the cock, I remembered a spirited one of the same animal in the *L'Agriculture ou Les Géorgiques Françoises*, of M. Rossuet.—W. W. 1793.

Where, mixed with graceful birch, the sombrous pine
And yew-tree[1] o'er the silver rocks recline;
I love to mark the quarry's moving trains,
Dwarf panniered steeds, and men, and numerous wains:
How busy all[2] the enormous hive within,
While Echo dallies with its[3] various din!
Some (hear you not their chisels' clinking sound?)[4]
Toil, small as pigmies in the gulf profound;
Some, dim between the lofty[5] cliffs descried,
O'erwalk the slender[6] plank from side to side;
These, by the pale-blue rocks that ceaseless ring,
In airy baskets hanging, work and sing.[7]

Just where a cloud above the mountain rears[8]
An[9] edge all flame, the broadening sun appears;
A long blue bar its ægis orb divides,
And breaks the spreading of its golden tides;
And now that orb has touched the purple steep
Whose softened image penetrates the deep.[10]

[1] 1836.
Bright'ning the cliffs between where sombrous pine,
And yew-trees . . . . 1793.

[2] 1836.
How busy the enormous hive within, 1793.

[3] 1836.
. . . . . . with the . . 1793.

[4] 1836.
Some hardly heard their chissel's clinking sound, 1793.

[5] 1836.
. . . . th' aëreal . . . 1793.

[6] 1815.
. . viewless . . . . . . 1793.

[7] 1836.
Glad from their airy baskets hang and sing. 1793.

[8] 1836.
Hung o'er a cloud, above the steep that rears 1793.

[9] 1820.
It's . . . . 1793.

[10] 1845.
And now it touches on the purple steep
That flings his shadow on the pictur'd deep. 1793.

'Cross the calm lake's blue shades the cliffs aspire,
With towers and woods, a "prospect all on fire"; *
While[1] coves and secret hollows, through a ray
Of fainter gold, a purple gleam betray.
Each slip of lawn the broken rocks between
Shines in the light with more than earthly green:[2]
Deep yellow beams the scattered stems[3] illume,
Far in the level forest's central gloom:
Waving his hat, the shepherd, from[4] the vale,
Directs his winding dog the cliffs to scale,—
The dog, loud barking, 'mid the glittering rocks,
Hunts, where his master points, the intercepted flocks.[5]
Where oaks o'erhang the road the radiance shoots
On tawny earth, wild weeds, and twisted roots;
The druid-stones a brightened ring unfold;[6]

That flings its image . . . . . . 1832.

And now the sun has touched the purple steep
Whose softened image penetrates the deep. 1836.

[1] 1836.
The coves . . . . 1793.

[2] 1836.
The gilded turf arrays in richer green
Each speck of lawn the broken rocks between; 1793.
. . . invests with richer green 1820.

[3] 1827.
. . . . boles . 1793.

[4] 1827.
. . . . . . in . . 1793.

[5] 1836.
That, barking busy 'mid the glittering rocks,
Hunts, where he points, the intercepted flocks; 1793.

[6] 1845.
The Druid stones † their lighted fane unfold, 1793.
. . . a burnished ring unfold; 1836.

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* I am unable to trace this quotation.—Ed.

† Not far from Broughton is a Druid monument, of which I do not recollect that any tour descriptive of this country makes mention. Perhaps this poem may fall into the hands of some curious traveller, who may thank me for informing him, that up the Duddon, the river which forms the æstuary at Broughton, may be found some of the most romantic scenery of these mountains.—W. W. 1793.

This circle is at the top of Swinside, a glen about four miles from Broughton. It consists of 50 stones, 90 yards in circumference; and is on the fell, which is part of the range terminating in Black Combe.—Ed.

And all the babbling brooks are liquid gold;
Sunk to a curve, the day-star lessens still,
Gives one bright glance, and drops[1] behind the hill.*

In these secluded vales, if village fame,
Confirmed by hoary hairs, belief may claim;
When up the hills, as now, retired the light,
Strange apparitions mocked the shepherd's sight.[2]

The form appears of one that spurs his steed
Midway along the hill with desperate speed;[3]
Unhurt pursues his lengthened flight, while all
Attend, at every stretch, his headlong fall.
Anon, appears a brave, a gorgeous show
Of horsemen-shadows moving to and fro;[4]
At intervals imperial banners stream,[5]
And now the van reflects the solar beam;[6]

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[1] 1827.
. . . . sinks . . . 1793.

[2] 1845.
In these lone vales, if aught of faith may claim,
Thin silver hairs, and ancient hamlet fame;
When up the hills, as now, retreats the light,
Strange apparitions mock the village sight. 1793.

In these secluded vales, if village fame,
Confirmed by silver hairs, belief may claim;
When up the hills, as now, retired the light,
Strange apparitions mocked the gazer's sight. 1820.
. . . . shepherd's sight. 1836.

[3] 1836.
A desperate form appears, that spurs his steed,
Along the midway cliffs with violent speed; 1793.

[4] 1836.
Anon, in order mounts a gorgeous show
Of horsemen shadows winding to and fro; 1793.

[5] This line was added in 1820.

[6] 1820.
. . . is gilt with evening's beam, 1793.

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* From Thomson: see Scott's *Critical Essays*.—W. W. 1793.
It is difficult to know to what Wordsworth here alludes, but compare *The Seasons*, "Summer," l. 1467.
and now a golden curve,
Gives one bright glance, then total disappears.—Ed.

The rear through iron brown betrays a sullen gleam.
While silent stands the admiring crowd below,
Silent the visionary warriors go,
Winding in ordered pomp their upward way *
Till the last banner of their[1] long array
Has disappeared, and every trace is fled

[1] 1849.
. . . . of the . . 1836.

* See a description of an appearance of this kind in Clark's *Survey of the Lakes*, accompanied with vouchers of its veracity, that may amuse the reader. —W. W. 1793.

The passage in Clark's folio volume, *A Survey of the Lakes*, etc., which suggested to Wordsworth the above lines in the *Evening Walk*, is to be found in chapter i. of the second book, p. 55. It gives a weird account of the appearance of horsemen being exercised in troops upon "Southen-fell side, as seen on the 25th of June 1744 by William Lancaster of Blakehills, and a farm servant, David Strichet—

"These visionary horsemen seemed to come from the lowest part of Southen-fell, and became visible just at a place called Knott. They then moved in regular troops along the side of the fell, till they came opposite Blakehills, when they went over the mountain. Then they described a kind of curvilinear path upon the side of the fell, and both these first and last appearances were bounded by the top of the mountain.

"Frequently the last, or last but one, in a troop would leave his place, and gallop to the front, and then take the same pace with the rest—a regular swift walk. Thus changes happened to every troop (for many troops appeared) and oftener than once or twice, yet not at all times alike. . . . Nor was this phenomenon seen at Blakehill only, it was seen by every person at every cottage within the distance of a mile. Neither was it confined to a momentary view, for from the time that Strichet first observed it, the appearance must have lasted at least two hours and a half, viz. from half past seven till the night coming on prevented further view."

This interesting optical illusion—which suggests the wonderful island in the Atlantic, seen from the isles of Aran near Galway, alluded to in the *Chorographical description of West, or H-Ier-Connaught*, of R. O'Flaherty —was caused by the peculiar angle of the light from the setting sun, the reflection of the water of the Solway, and the refraction of the vapour and clouds above the Solway. These aerial and visionary horsemen were being exercised somewhere above the Kirkcudbright shore. It was not the first time the phenomenon had been seen within historic times, on the same fell-side, and at the same time of year. Canon Rawnsley writes to me, "I have an idea that the fact that it took place at midsummer eve (June 27), the eve of the Feast of St. John, upon which occasion the shepherds hereabout used to light bonfires on the hills (no doubt a relic of the custom of the Beltane fires of old Norse days, perhaps of earlier sun-worship festivals of British times), may have had something to do with the naming of the mountain Blencathara of which Southen-fell (or Shepherd's-fell, as the name implies) is part. Blencathara, we are told, may mean the Hill of Demons, or the haunted hill. My suggestion is that the old sun-worshippers, who met in midsummer eve on Castrigg at the Druid circle or Donn-ring, saw just the same phenomenon as Strichet and Lancaster saw upon Southen-fell, and hence the name. Nay, perhaps the Druid circle was built where it is, because it was well in view of the Demcn Hill."—Ed.

Of splendour—save the beacon's spiry head
Tipt with eve's latest gleam of burning red.[1]

Now, while the solemn evening shadows sail,
On slowly-waving pinions,[2] down the vale;
And, fronting the bright west, yon oak entwines
Its darkening boughs and leaves, in stronger lines;[3]
'Tis pleasant near the tranquil lake to stray[4]
Where, winding on along some secret bay,[5]
The swan uplifts his chest, and backward flings
His neck, a varying arch, between his towering wings:
The eye that marks the gliding creature sees
How graceful, pride can be, and how majestic, ease.[6]

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[1] 1836.

Lost gradual o'er the heights in pomp they go,
While silent stands th' admiring vale below;
Till, but the lonely beacon all is fled,
That tips with eve's last gleam his spiry head. 1793.

Till, save the lonely beacon, . . . 1820.

In the edition of 1836 the seven lines of the printed text—205-211—replaced these four lines of the editions 1793-1832.

[2] 1836.

On red slow-waving pinions . . . 1793.

[3] 1820.

And, fronting the bright west in stronger lines,
The oak its dark'ning boughs and foliage twines, 1793.

The edition of 1815 omitted this couplet. It was restored in its final form in the edition of 1820.

[4] 1836.

I love beside the glowing lake to stray, 1793.

How pleasant near the tranquil lake to stray, 1815.

[5] 1836.

. . . . to stray,
Where winds the road along the secret bay;
By rills that tumble down the woody steeps,
And run in transport to the dimpling deeps;
Along the "wild meand'ring shore" to view,
Obsequious Grace the winding swan pursue. 1793.

. . . . . . a secret bay; 1815.

. . . meandering shore" . 1815.

[6] 1836.

He swells his lifted chest, and backward flings
His bridling neck between his tow'ring wings;

While tender cares and mild domestic loves
With furtive watch pursue her as she moves,
The female with a meeker charm succeeds,
And her brown little-ones around her leads,
Nibbling the water lilies as they pass,
Or playing wanton with the floating grass.
She, in a mother's care, her beauty's pride
Forgetting, calls the wearied to her side;[1]
Alternately they mount her back, and rest
Close by her mantling wings' embraces prest.*

Long may they float upon this flood serene;
Theirs be these holms untrodden, still, and green,
Where leafy shades fence off the blustering gale,
And breathes in peace the lily of the vale![2]
Yon isle, which feels not even the milk-maid's feet,

Stately, and burning in his pride, divides
And glorying looks around, the silent tides:
On as he floats, the silver'd waters glow,
Proud of the varying arch and moveless form of snow.
1793.

. . . . . . his towering wings;
In all the majesty of ease divides, 1815.

[1] 1845.

. . . . . . her beauty's pride
Forgets, unweary'd watching every side,
She calls them near, and with affection sweet
Alternately relieves their weary feet; 1793.

[2] 1836.

Long may ye roam these hermit waves that sleep,
In birch-besprinkl'd cliffs embosom'd deep;
These fairy holms untrodden, still, and green,
Whose shades protect the hidden wave serene;
Whence fragrance scents the water's desart gale,
The violet, and the † lily of the vale; 1793.

Long may ye float upon these floods serene;
Yours be these holms untrodden, still, and green,
Whose leafy shades fence off the blustering gale,
Where breathes in peace the lily of the vale. 1827.

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* This is a fact of which I have been an eye-witness.—W. W. 1793.
† The lily of the valley is found in great abundance in the smaller islands of Winandermere.—W. W. 1793.

Yet hears her song, "by distance made more sweet,"[1] *
Yon isle conceals their home, their hut-like bower;
Green water-rushes overspread the floor;[2]
Long grass and willows form the woven wall,
And swings above the roof the poplar tall.
Thence issuing often with unwieldy stalk,
They crush with broad black feet their flowery walk;[3]
Or, from the neighbouring water, hear at morn[4]
The hound, the horse's tread, and mellow horn;
Involve their serpent-necks in changeful rings,
Rolled wantonly between their slippery wings,
Or, starting up with noise and rude delight,
Force half upon the wave their cumbrous flight.[5]

---

[1] 1820.
Where, tho' her far-off twilight ditty steal,
They not the trip of harmless milkmaid feel. 1793.

[2] 1836.
Yon tuft conceals your home, your cottage bow'r,
Fresh water rushes strew the verdant floor; 1793.
Yon isle conceals . . . . . . 1820.

[3] 1836.
Thence issuing oft, unwieldly as ye stalk,
Ye crush with broad black feet your flow'ry walk; 1793.
Thence issuing often with unwieldly stalk,
With broad black feet ye crush your flow'ry walk; 1820.

[4] 1820.
Safe from your door ye hear at breezy morn, 1793.

[5] 1836. . . . . . and mellow horn;
At peace inverted your lithe necks ye lave,
With the green bottom strewing o'er the wave;
No ruder sound your desart haunts invades,
Than waters dashing wild, or rocking shades.
Ye ne'er, like hapless human wanderers, throw
Your young on winter's winding sheet of snow. 1793.
. . . . . . and mellow horn;
Involve your serpent necks in changeful rings,
Rolled wantonly between your slippery wings,
Or, starting up with noise and rude delight,
Force half upon the wave your cumbrous flight. 1820.

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* The quotation is from Collins' *The Passions*, l. 60. Compare *Personal Talk*, l. 26.—ED.

Fair Swan! by all a mother's joys caressed,
Haply some wretch has eyed, and called thee blessed;
When with her infants, from some shady seat
By the lake's edge, she rose—to face the noontide heat;
Or taught their limbs along the dusty road
A few short steps to totter with their load.[1]

I see her now, denied to lay her head,
On cold blue nights, in hut or straw-built shed,
Turn to a silent smile their sleepy cry,
By pointing to the gliding moon [2] on high.

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[1] 1836.

Fair Swan! by all a mother's joys caress'd,
Haply some wretch has ey'd, and call'd thee bless'd;
Who faint, and beat by summer's breathless ray,
Hath dragg'd her babes along this weary way;
While arrowy fire extorting feverish groans
Shot stinging through her stark o'er labour'd bones.
—With backward gaze, lock'd joints, and step of pain,
Her seat scarce left, she strives, alas! in vain,
To teach their limbs along the burning road
A few short steps to totter with their load,
Shakes her numb arm that slumbers with its weight,
And eyes through tears the mountain's shadeless height;
And bids her soldier come her woes to share,
Asleep on Bunker's * charnel hill afar;
For hope's deserted well why wistful look?
Chok'd is the pathway, and the pitcher broke. 1793.

In 1793 this passage occupied the place of the six lines of the final text (250-255).

. . . . . . and called thee bless'd;
The whilst upon some sultry summer's day
She dragged her babes along this weary way;
Or taught their limbs along the burning road
A few short steps to totter with their load. 1820.

The while . . . . . . 1832.

[2] 1845.

. . . a shooting star . . 1793.

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* In the 1793 edition this line reads "Asleep on Minden's charnel plain afar." The *errata* list inserted in some copies of that edition gives "Bunker's charnel hill."—ED.

—[1] When low-hung clouds each star of summer hide,
And fireless are the valleys far and wide,
Where the brook brawls along the public [2] road
Dark with bat-haunted ashes stretching broad,
[3] Oft has she taught them on her lap to lay
The shining glow-worm; or, in heedless play,
Toss it from hand to hand, disquieted;
While others, not unseen, are free to shed
Green unmolested light upon their mossy bed.[4]

Oh! when the sleety showers her path assail,
And like a torrent roars the headstrong gale;[5]
No more her breath can thaw their fingers cold,
Their frozen arms her neck no more can fold;

---

[1] 1845.
I hear, while in the forest depth he sees,
The Moon's fix'd gaze between the opening trees,
In broken sounds her elder grief demand,
And skyward lift, like one that prays, his hand,
If, in that country, where he dwells afar,
His father views that good, that kindly star;
—Ah me! all light is mute amid the gloom,
The interlunar cavern of the tomb. 1793-1832.
In broken sounds her elder child demand,
While toward the sky he lifts his pale bright hand, 1836.
—Alas! all light . . . . . . 1836.
Those eight lines were withdrawn in 1845.

[2] 1836.
. . . . painful . 1793.

[3] 1820.
The distant clock forgot, and chilling dew,
Pleas'd thro' the dusk their breaking smiles to view,
Only in the edition of 1793.

[4] 1836.
. . . . . on her lap to play
Delighted, with the glow-worm's harmless ray
Toss'd light from hand to hand; while on the ground
Small circles of green radiance gleam around. 1793.

[5] 1836.
Oh! when the bitter showers her path assail,
And roars between the hills the torrent gale, 1793.
. . . sleety showers . . . 1827.

[1] Weak roof a cowering form two babes to shield,
And faint the fire a dying heart can yield!
Press the sad kiss, fond mother! vainly fears
Thy flooded cheek to wet them with its tears;
[2] No tears can chill them, and no bosom warms,
Thy breast their death-bed, coffined in thine arms!

Sweet are the sounds that mingle from afar,
Heard by calm lakes, as peeps the folding star,
Where the duck dabbles 'mid the rustling sedge,
And feeding pike starts from the water's edge,
Or the swan stirs the reeds, his neck and bill
Wetting, that drip upon the water still;
And heron, as resounds the trodden shore,
Shoots upward, darting his long neck before.
[3]

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[1] 1827.

Scarce heard, their chattering lips her shoulder chill,
And her cold back their colder bosoms thrill;
All blind she wilders o'er the lightless heath,
Led by Fear's cold wet hand, and dogg'd by Death;
Death, as she turns her neck the kiss to seek,
Breaks off the dreadful kiss with angry shriek.
Snatch'd from her shoulder with despairing moan,
She clasps them at that dim-seen roofless stone.—
"Now ruthless Tempest launch thy deadliest dart!
Fall fires—but let us perish heart to heart." 1793.

The first, third, and fourth of these couplets were omitted from the edition of 1820. The whole passage was withdrawn in 1827.

[2] 1820.

Soon shall the Light'ning hold before thy head
His torch, and shew them slumbering in their bed,
Only in the edition of 1793.

[3] 1820.

While, by the scene compos'd, the breast subsides,
Nought wakens or disturbs it's tranquil tides;
Nought but the char that for the may-fly leaps,
And breaks the mirror of the circling deeps;
Or clock, that blind against the wanderer born
Drops at his feet, and stills his droning horn.

Now, with religious awe, the farewell light
Blends with the solemn colouring of night;[1]
'Mid groves of clouds that crest the mountain's brow,
And round the west's proud lodge their shadows throw,
Like Una* shining on her gloomy way,
The half-seen form of Twilight roams astray;
Shedding, through paly loop-holes mild and small,
Gleams that upon the lake's still bosom fall;[2]
[3] Soft o'er the surface creep those lustres pale

—The whistling swain that plods his ringing way
Where the slow waggon winds along the bay;
The sugh † of swallow flocks that twittering sweep,
The solemn curfew swinging long and deep;
The talking boat that moves with pensive sound,
Or drops his anchor down with plunge profound;
Of boys that bathe remote the faint uproar,
And restless piper wearying out the shore;
These all to swell the village murmurs blend,
That soften'd from the water-head descend.
While in sweet cadence rising small and still
The far-off minstrels of the haunted hill,
As the last bleating of the fold expires,
Tune in the mountain dells their water lyres.
Only in the edition of 1793.

[1] 1845.
. . . . . . of the night; 1793.

[2] 1815.
Thence, from three paly loopholes mild and small,
Slow lights upon the lake's still bosom fall, 1793.

[3] 1827.
Beyond the mountain's giant reach that hides
In deep determin'd gloom his subject tides.
—Mid the dark steeps repose the shadowy streams,
As touch'd with dawning moonlight's hoary gleams,

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* Alluding to this passage of Spenser:
. . . Her angel face
As the great eye of Heaven shined bright,
And made a sunshine in that shady place. W. W. 1793.
This passage is in *The Fairy Queen*, book I. canto iii. stanza 4.—Ed.

† Sugh, a Scotch word, expressive, as Mr. Gilpin explains it, of the sound of the motion of a stick through the air, or of the wind passing through the trees. See Burns' *Cottar's Saturday Night*.—W. W. 1793.
The line is in stanza ii., l. 1:
November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh.—Ed.

Tracking the motions of the fitful gale.[1]
With restless interchange at once the bright
Wins on the shade, the shade upon the light.
No favoured eye was e'er allowed to gaze
On lovelier spectacle in faery days;
When gentle Spirits urged a sportive chase,
Brushing with lucid wands the water's face;
While music, stealing round the glimmering deeps,
Charmed the tall circle of the enchanted steeps.
—The lights are vanished from the watery plains:
No wreck of all the pageantry remains.
Unheeded night has overcome the vales:
On the dark earth the wearied vision fails;
The latest lingerer of the forest train,
The lone black fir, forsakes the faded plain;
Last evening sight, the cottage smoke, no more,
Lost in the thickened darkness, glimmers hoar;
And, towering from the sullen dark-brown mere,
Like a black wall, the mountain-steeps appear.[2]

Long streaks of fairy light the wave illume
With bordering lines of intervening gloom, 1793.

The second and third of these couplets were cancelled in the edition of 1815, and the whole passage was withdrawn in 1827.

[1] 1836.

Soft o'er the surface creep the lustres pale
Tracking with silvering path the changeful gale. 1793.

. . . . . . those lustres pale
Tracking the fitful motions of the gale. 1815.

[2] 1815.

—'Tis restless magic all; at once the bright*
Breaks on the shade, the shade upon the light,
Fair Spirits are abroad; in sportive chase
Brushing with lucid wands the water's face,
While music stealing round the glimmering deeps
Charms the tall circle of th' enchanted steeps.
—As thro' th' astonished woods the notes ascend,
The mountain streams their rising song suspend;
Below Eve's listening Star, the sheep walk stills

---

* This long passage occupies, in the edition of 1793, the place of lines 297-314 in the final text given above.—Ed.

—Now o'er the soothed accordant heart we feel
A sympathetic twilight slowly steal,
And ever, as we fondly muse, we find
The soft gloom deepening on the tranquil mind.
Stay! pensive, sadly-pleasing visions, stay!
Ah no! as fades the vale, they fade away:
Yet still the tender, vacant gloom remains;
Still the cold cheek its shuddering tear retains.

It's drowsy tinklings on th' attentive hills;
The milkmaid stops her ballad, and her pail
Stays it's low murmur in th' unbreathing vale;
No night-duck clamours for his wilder'd mate,
Aw'd, while below the Genii hold their state.
—The pomp is fled, and mute the wondrous strains,
No wrack of all the pageant scene remains,
* So vanish those fair Shadows, human Joys,
But Death alone their vain regret destroys.
Unheeded Night has overcome the vales,
On the dark earth the baffl'd vision fails,
If peep between the clouds a star on high,
There turns for glad repose the weary eye;
The latest lingerer of the forest train,
The lone-black fir, forsakes the faded plain;
Last evening sight, the cottage smoke no more,
Lost in the deepen'd darkness, glimmers hoar;
High towering from the sullen dark-brown mere,
Like a black wall, the mountain steeps appear,
Thence red from different heights with restless gleam
Small cottage lights across the water stream,
Nought else of man or life remains behind
To call from other worlds the wilder'd mind,
Till pours the wakeful bird her solemn strains
† Heard by the night-calm of the watry plains.
—No purple prospects now the mind employ
Glowing in golden sunset tints of joy,
But o'er the sooth'd . . .

Only in the edition of 1793.

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* "So break those glittering shadows, human joys" (YOUNG).—W.W. 1793. The line occurs *Night* V, *The Complaint*, l. 1042, or l. 27 from the end. —ED.

† "Charming the night-calm with her powerful song." A line of one of our older poets.—W. W. 1793.

This line I have been unable to discover, but see Webster and Dekker in *Westward Hoe*, iv. c. "Charms with her excellent voice an awful silence through all this building."—ED.

The bird, who ceased, with fading light, to thread
Silent the hedge or steamy rivulet's bed,[1]
From his grey re-appearing tower shall soon
Salute with gladsome note the rising moon,
While with a hoary light she frosts the ground,
And pours a deeper blue to Æther's bound;
Pleased, as she moves, her pomp of clouds to fold
In robes of azure, fleecy-white, and gold.[2]

Above yon eastern hill,[3] where darkness broods
O'er all its vanished dells, and lawns, and woods;
Where but a mass of shade the sight can trace,
Even now she shows, half-veiled, her lovely face:[4]
Across[5] the gloomy valley flings her light,
Far to the western slopes with hamlets white;
And gives, where woods the chequered upland strew,
To the green corn of summer, autumn's hue.

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[1] 1836.
The bird, with fading light who ceas'd to thread
Silent the hedge or steaming rivulet's bed, 1793.
The bird, who ceased, with fading light, to thread 1815.

[2] 1836.
Salute with boding note the rising moon,
Frosting with hoary light the pearly ground,
And pouring deeper blue to Æther's bound;
Rejoic'd her solemn pomp of clouds to fold
In robes of azure, fleecy white, and gold,
While rose and poppy, as the glow-worm fades,
Checquer with paler red the thicket shades. 1793.

The last two lines occur only in the edition of 1793.

And pleased her solemn pomp of clouds to fold 1815.

[3] 1836.
Now o'er the eastern hill, ... 1793.
See, o'er . . . . 1815.

[4] 1836.
She lifts in silence up her lovely face; 1793.

[5] 1836.
Above . . . . 1793.

Thus Hope, first pouring from her blessed horn
Her dawn, far lovelier than the moon's own morn,
'Till higher mounted, strives in vain to cheer
The weary hills, impervious, blackening near;
Yet does she still, undaunted, throw the while
On darling spots remote her tempting smile.

Even now she decks for me a distant scene,
(For dark and broad the gulf of time between)
Gilding that cottage with her fondest ray,
(Sole bourn, sole wish, sole object of my way;
How fair its lawns and sheltering[1] woods appear!
How sweet its streamlet murmurs in mine ear!)
Where we, my Friend, to happy[2] days shall rise,
'Till our small share of hardly-paining sighs
(For sighs will ever trouble human breath)
Creep hushed into the tranquil breast of death.

But now the clear bright Moon her zenith gains,
And, rimy without speck, extend the plains:
The deepest cleft the mountain's front displays[3]
Scarce hides a shadow from her searching rays;
From the dark-blue faint silvery threads divide
The hills, while gleams below the azure tide;
Time softly treads; throughout the landscape breathes
A peace enlivened, not disturbed, by wreaths
Of charcoal-smoke, that o'er the fallen wood,
Steal down the hill, and spread along the flood.[4]

---

[1] 1815.
. . . . . . silvery . . . 1793.

[2] 1815.
. . . . . golden . . . . 1793.

[3] 1836.
The deepest dell the mountain's breast displays, 1793.
. . . the mountain's front . 1820.

[4] 1836.
The scene is waken'd, yet its peace unbroke,
By silver'd wreaths of quiet charcoal smoke,
That, o'er the ruins of the fallen wood,
Steal down the hills, and spread along the flood. 1793.

The song of mountain-streams, unheard by day,
Now hardly heard, beguiles my homeward way.*
Air listens, like the sleeping water, still,
To catch the spiritual music of the hill,[1]
Broke only by the slow clock tolling deep,
Or shout that wakes the ferry-man from sleep,
The echoed hoof nearing the distant shore,
The boat's first motion—made with dashing oar;[2]
Sound of closed gate, across the water borne,
Hurrying the timid[3] hare through rustling corn;
The sportive outcry of the mocking owl;[4]
And at long intervals the mill-dog's howl;
The distant forge's swinging thump profound;
Or yell, in the deep woods, of lonely hound.

---

[1] 1836.
All air is, as the sleeping water, still,
List'ning th' aëreal music of the hill, 1793.
Air listens, as the sleeping water still,
To catch the spiritual music of the hill, 1832.

[2] 1836.
Soon follow'd by his hollow-parting oar,
And echo'd hoof approaching the far shore; 1793.

[3] 1836.
. . the feeding . . . . . 1793.

[4] 1836.
The tremulous sob of the complaining owl; 1793.

---

* Compare Dr. John Brown—

But the soft murmur of swift-gushing rills,
Forth issuing from the mountain's distant steep
(Unheard till now, and now scarce heard), proclaim'd
All things at rest.

This Dr. John Brown—a singularly versatile English divine (1717-1766)—was one of the first, as Wordsworth pointed out, to lead the way to a true estimate of the English Lakes. His description of the Vale of Keswick, in a letter to a friend, is as fine as anything in Gray's *Journal*. Wordsworth himself quotes the lines given in this footnote in the first section of his *Guide through the District of the Lakes.*—Ed.

LINES

Written while Sailing in a Boat at Evening

Composed 1789.—Published 1798

[This title is scarcely correct. It was during a solitary walk on the banks of the Cam that I was first struck with this appearance, and applied it to my own feelings in the manner here expressed, changing the scene to the Thames, near Windsor. This, and the three stanzas of the following poem, *Remembrance of Collins*, formed one piece; but, upon the recommendation of Coleridge, the three last stanzas were separated from the other.—I. F.]

The title of the poem in 1798, when it consisted of five stanzas, was *Lines written near Richmond, upon the Thames, at Evening*. When, in the edition of 1800, it was divided, the title of the first part was, *Lines written when sailing in a Boat at Evening;* that of the second part was *Lines written near Richmond upon the Thames.*

From 1815 to 1843, both poems were placed by Wordsworth among those "of Sentiment and Reflection." In 1845 they were transferred to "Poems written in Youth."—Ed.

How richly glows the water's breast
Before us, tinged with evening hues,[1]
While, facing thus the crimson west,
The boat her silent course [2] pursues!
And see how dark the backward stream!
A little moment past so smiling!
And still, perhaps, with faithless gleam,
Some other loiterers [3] beguiling.

---

[1] 1815.
How rich the wave, in front, impress
With evening-twilight's summer hues, 1798.

[2] 1802.
. . . . . path . . . 1798.

[3] 1815.
. . . loiterer . . . 1798.

Such views the youthful Bard allure;
But, heedless of the following gloom,
He deems their colours shall endure
Till peace go with him to the tomb.
—And let him nurse his fond deceit,
And what if he must die in sorrow!
Who would not cherish dreams so sweet,
Though grief and pain may come to-morrow?

REMEMBRANCE OF COLLINS

COMPOSED UPON THE THAMES NEAR RICHMOND *

Composed 1789.—Published 1798

GLIDE gently, thus for ever glide,†
O Thames! that other bards may see
As lovely visions by thy side
As now, fair river! come to me.
O glide, fair stream! for ever so,
Thy quiet soul on all bestowing,
Till all our minds for ever flow
As thy deep waters now are flowing.

Vain thought!—Yet be as now thou art,
That in thy waters may be seen
The image of a poet's heart,
How bright, how solemn, how serene!
Such as did once the Poet bless,[1]

---

[1] 1800.
Such heart did once the poet bless, 1798.

---

* The title in the editions 1802-1815 was *Remembrance of Collins, written upon the Thames near Richmond.*—ED.

† Compare the *After-thought* to "The River Duddon. A Series of Sonnets":

Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever glide.—ED.

Who murmuring here a later * ditty,[1]
Could find no refuge from distress
But in the milder grief of pity.

Now let us, as we float along,[2]
For *him*[3] suspend the dashing oar ; †
And pray that never child of song
May know that Poet's sorrows more.[4]
How calm ! how still ! the only sound,
The dripping of the oar suspended !
—The evening darkness gathers round
By virtue's holiest Powers attended.

---

[1] 1815.
Who, pouring here a *later* ‡ ditty, 1798.

[2] 1802.
Remembrance, as we glide along, 1798.
. . . . float . . 1800.

[3] 1802.
For him . . . . . 1798.

[4] 1802.
May know his freezing sorrows more. 1798.

---

* Collins's *Ode on the Death of Thomson*, the last written, I believe, of the poems which were published during his life-time. This Ode is also alluded to in the next stanza.—W. W. 1798.

† Compare Collins's *Ode on the Death of Thomson. The Scene on the Thames near Richmond:*

Remembrance oft shall haunt the shore
When Thames in summer wreaths is drest,
And oft suspend the dashing oar
To bid his gentle spirit rest.

As Mr. Dowden suggests, the *him* was probably italicised by Wordsworth, "because the oar is suspended not for Thomson but for Collins." The italics were first used in the edition of 1802.—Ed.

‡ The italics only occur in the editions of 1798 and 1800.—Ed.

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES

Taken during a Pedestrian Tour among the Alps

Composed 1791-2.*—Published 1793

To the Rev. Robert Jones, Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge

Dear Sir,†—However desirous I might have been of giving you proofs of the high place you hold in my esteem, I should have been cautious of wounding your delicacy by thus publicly addressing you, had not the circumstance of our having been companions among the Alps, seemed to give this dedication a propriety sufficient to do away any scruples which your modesty might otherwise have suggested.‡

In inscribing this little work to you, I consult my heart. You know well how great is the difference between two companions lolling in a post-chaise, and two travellers plodding slowly along the road, side by side, each with his little knapsack of necessaries upon his shoulders. How much more of heart between the two latter!

I am happy in being conscious that I shall have one reader who will approach the conclusion of these few pages with regret. You they must certainly interest, in reminding you of moments to which you can hardly look back without a pleasure not the less dear from a shade of melancholy. You will meet with few images without recollecting the spot where we observed

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* See note to the "Juvenile Pieces" in the edition of 1836 (p. 1).—Ed.

† There is something characteristic in Wordsworth's addressing an intimate travelling companion in this way. S. T. C., or Charles Lamb, would have written, as we do, "My dear Jones"; but Wordsworth addressed his friend as "Dear Sir," and described his sister as "a Young Lady," and as a "Female Friend."—Ed.

‡ In a small pocket copy of the *Orlando Furioso* of Ariosto—now in the possession of the poet's grandson, Mr. Gordon Wordsworth—of which the title-page is torn away, the following is written on the first page, "My companion in the Alps with Jones. W. Wordsworth:" also "W. W. to D. W." (He had given it to his sister Dorothy.) On the last page is written, "I carried this Book with me in my pedestrian tour in the Alps with Jones. W. Wordsworth." Dorothy Wordsworth gave this interesting relic to Miss Quillinan, from whose library it passed to that of its present owner.—Ed.

them together; consequently, whatever is feeble in my design, or spiritless in my colouring, will be amply supplied by your own memory.

With still greater propriety I might have inscribed to you a description of some of the features of your native mountains, through which we have wandered together, in the same manner, with so much pleasure. But the sea-sunsets, which give such splendour to the vale of Clwyd, Snowdon, the chair of Idris, the quiet village of Bethgelert, Menai and her Druids, the Alpine steeps of the Conway, and the still more interesting windings of the wizard stream of the Dee, remain yet untouched. Apprehensive that my pencil may never be exercised on these subjects, I cannot let slip this opportunity of thus publicly assuring you with how much affection and esteem

I am, dear Sir,

Most sincerely yours,

LONDON, 1793. W. WORDSWORTH.

[Much the greatest part of this poem was composed during my walks upon the banks of the Loire, in the years 1791, 1792. I will only notice that the description of the valley filled with mist, beginning—'In solemn shapes'—was taken from that beautiful region of which the principal features are Lungarn and Sarnen. Nothing that I ever saw in Nature left a more delightful impression on my mind than that which I have attempted, alas, how feebly! to convey to others in these lines. Those two lakes have always interested me especially, from bearing in their size and other features, a resemblance to those of the North of England. It is much to be deplored that a district so beautiful should be so unhealthy as it is.—I. F.]

As the original text of the *Descriptive Sketches* is printed in Appendix I. (p. 309) to this volume—with all the notes to that edition of 1793—it is not quoted in the footnotes to the final text in the pages which follow, except in cases which will justify themselves. Therefore the various readings which follow begin with the edition of 1815, which was, however, a mere fragment of the original text. Almost the whole of the poem of 1793 was reproduced in 1820, but there were many alterations of the text in that edition, and in those of 1827, 1832, 1836 and 1845. Wordsworth's own footnotes here reproduced are those which he retained in the edition of 1849.

Descriptive Sketches was ranked among the "Juvenile

Pieces" from 1815 onwards: but in 1836 it was put in a class by itself along with the *Female Vagrant.**—ED.

Happiness (if she had been to be found on earth) among the charms of Nature—Pleasures of the pedestrian Traveller—Author crosses France to the Alps—Present state of the Grande Chartreuse—Lake of Como—Time, Sunset—Same Scene, Twilight—Same Scene, Morning; its voluptuous Character; Old man and forest-cottage music—River Tusa—Via Mala and Grison Gipsy—Sckellenen-thal—Lake of Uri—Stormy sunset—Chapel of William Tell—Force of local emotion—Chamois-chaser—View of the higher Alps—Manner of Life of a Swiss mountaineer, interspersed with views of the higher Alps—Golden Age of the Alps—Life and views continued—Ranz des Vaches, famous Swiss Air—Abbey of Einsiedlen and its pilgrims—Valley of Chamouny—Mont Blanc—Slavery of Savoy—Influence of liberty on cottage-happiness—France—Wish for the Extirpation of slavery—Conclusion.

WERE there, below, a spot of holy ground
Where from distress a refuge might be found,
And solitude prepare the soul for heaven;
Sure, nature's God that spot to man had given [1]
Where falls the purple morning far and wide
In flakes of light upon the mountain-side;
Where with loud voice the power of water shakes [2]
The leafy wood, or sleeps in quiet lakes.

Yet not unrecompensed the man shall roam,
Who at the call of summer quits his home,

[1] 1827.
. . . . . a spot of holy ground,
By Pain and her sad family unfound,
Sure, Nature's God that spot to man had given,
Where murmuring rivers join the song of even;
Where falls . . . . 1820.

[2] 1836.
Where the resounding power of water shakes 1820.
Where with loud voice the power of waters shakes 1827.

* By an evident error, corrected in the first reprint of this edition (1840). See p. 79.—ED.

And plods through some wide realm o'er vale and height,
Though seeking only holiday delight;[1]
At least, not owning to himself an aim
To which the sage would give a prouder name.[2]
No gains too cheaply earned his fancy cloy,
Though every passing zephyr whispers joy;
Brisk toil, alternating with ready ease,
Feeds the clear current of his sympathies.[3]
For him sod-seats the cottage-door adorn;
And peeps the far-off spire, his evening bourn!
Dear is the forest frowning o'er his head,
And dear the velvet green-sward to his tread:[4]
Moves there a cloud o'er mid-day's flaming eye?
Upward he looks—"and calls it luxury:" *

---

[1] 1836.

And not unrecompensed the man shall roam,
Who, to converse with Nature, quits his home,
And plods o'er hills and vales his way forlorn,
Wooing her various charms from eve to morn. 1820.

Yet not unrecompensed the man shall roam,
Who at the call of summer quits his home,
And plods through some far realm o'er vale and height,
Though seeking only holiday delight; 1827.

[2] Lines 13 and 14 were introduced in 1827.

[3] 1827.

No sad vacuities † his heart annoy;—
Blows not a Zephyr but it whispers joy;
For him lost flowers their idle sweets exhale;
He tastes the meanest note that swells the gale;
For him sod-seats . . . . 1815.

Breathes not a zephyr but it whispers joy;
For him the loneliest flowers their sweets exhale;
He marks "the meanest note that swells the ‡ gale;"
1820.

[4] 1820.

And dear the green-sward to his velvet tread; 1815.

---

* See Addison's *Cato*, Act 1. Scene i., l. 171:
Blesses his stars, and thinks it luxury.—Ed.

† In the edition of 1815, the 28 lines, from "No sad vacuities" to "a wanderer came there," are entitled "Pleasures of the Pedestrian."—Ed.

‡ See *Ode on the Pleasure arising from Vicissitude*, l. 54:
The meanest floweret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale.—Ed.

Kind Nature's charities his steps attend;
In every babbling brook he finds a friend;
While[1] chastening thoughts of sweetest use, bestowed
By wisdom, moralise his pensive road.
Host of his welcome inn, the noon-tide bower,
To his spare meal he calls the passing poor;
He views the sun uplift his golden fire,
Or sink, with heart alive like Memnon's lyre; *
Blesses the moon that comes with kindly ray,
To light him shaken by his rugged way.[2]
Back from his sight no bashful children steal;
He sits a brother at the cottage-meal;[3]
His humble looks no shy restraint impart;
Around him plays at will the virgin heart.
While unsuspended wheels the village dance,
The maidens eye him with enquiring glance,
Much wondering by what fit of crazing care,
Or desperate love, bewildered, he came there.[4]

A hope, that prudence could not then approve,
That clung to Nature with a truant's love,
O'er Gallia's wastes of corn my footsteps led;
Her files of road-elms, high above my head

---

[1] 1815.
Whilst . . . . . . Only in 1820.

[2] 1820.
. . . . . with kindest ray
To light him shaken by his viewless way. 1815.

[3] 1836.
With bashful fear no cottage children steal
From him, a brother at the cottage meal, 1815.

[4] 1845.
Much wondering what sad stroke of crazing Care,
Or desperate Love could lead a wanderer there. 1815.
Much wondering in what fit of crazing care,
Or desperate love, a wanderer came there. 1836.

---

* The lyre of Memnon is reported to have emitted melancholy or chearful tones, as it was touched by the sun's evening or morning rays.—W. W. 1793.

In long-drawn vista, rustling in the breeze;
Or where her pathways straggle as they please
By lonely farms and secret villages.
But lo! the Alps ascending white in air,[1]
Toy with the sun and glitter from afar.

And now, emerging from the forest's gloom,
I greet thee, Chartreuse, while I mourn thy doom.
Whither is fled that Power whose frown severe
Awed sober Reason till she crouched in fear?[2]
That Silence, once in deathlike fetters bound,
Chains that were loosened only by the sound
Of holy rites chanted in measured round?[3]

---

[1] 1836.

Me, lured by hope her sorrows to remove,
A heart that could not much itself approve,
O'er Gallia's wastes of corn dejected led,
Her road elms rustling high above my head,
Or through her truant pathways' native charms,
By secret villages and lonely farms,
To where the Alps . . . . . . 1820.

. . . could not much herself approve, 1827.

. . lured by hope its sorrows to remove, 1832.

The lines 46, 47, were expanded in the edition of 1836 from one line in the editions of 1820-1832.

[2] 1836.

I sigh at hoary Chartreuse' doom.
Where now is fled that Power whose frown severe
Tamed "sober Reason" till she crouched in fear?
That breathed a death-like peace these woods around;
The cloister startles . . . . . . 1815.

Even now, emerging from the forest's gloom,
I heave a sigh at hoary Chartreuse' doom.
Where now is fled that Power whose frown severe
Tamed "sober Reason" till she crouched in fear? 1820.

[3] 1836.

That breathed a death-like silence wide around,
Broke only by the unvaried torrent's sound,
Or prayer-bell by the dull cicada drown'd. 1820.

The editions of 1827 and 1832 omit these lines.

—The voice of blasphemy the fane alarms,
The cloister startles at the gleam of arms.[1]
The [2] thundering tube the aged angler hears,*
Bent o'er the groaning flood that sweeps away his tears.[3]
Cloud-piercing pine-trees nod their troubled heads,[4]
Spires, rocks, and lawns a browner night o'erspreads;
Strong terror checks the female peasant's sighs,
And start the astonished shades at female eyes.
From Bruno's forest screams the affrighted jay,
And slow the insulted eagle wheels away.
A viewless flight of laughing Demons mock
The Cross, by angels planted † on the aërial rock.[5]
The "parting Genius" ‡ sighs with hollow breath
Along the mystic streams of Life and Death.§
Swelling the outcry dull, that long resounds
Portentous through her old woods' trackless bounds,

---

[1] 1836.
The cloister startles at the gleam of arms,
And Blasphemy the shuddering fane alarms; 1815.

[2] 1793.
That . . . . 1827.
The edition of 1836 returns to the text of 1793.

[3] 1836.
And swells the groaning torrent with his tears. 1815.
In the editions 1815-1832 lines 61, 62 followed line 66.

[4] 1836.
Nod the cloud-piercing pines their troubled heads, 1815.

[5] 1836.
The cross with hideous laughter Demons mock,
By angels planted on the aereal rock. 1815.

The cross, by angels on the aërial rock
Planted, a flight of laughing demons mock. 1832.

---

* Compare Pope's *Windsor Forest*, ll. 129, 130;
He lifts the tube, and levels with his eye:
Straight a short thunder breaks the frozen sky:—Ed.

† Alluding to crosses seen on the tops of the spiry rocks of the Chartreuse, which have every appearance of being inaccessible.—W. W. 1793.

‡ Compare Milton's *Ode on the Nativity*, stanza xx.—Ed.

§ Names of rivers at the Chartreuse.—W. W. 1793.

Vallombre,* 'mid her falling fanes deplores
For ever broke, the sabbath of her bowers.

'More pleased, my foot the hidden margin roves
Of Como, bosomed deep in chestnut groves.
No meadows thrown between, the giddy steeps
Tower, bare or sylvan, from the narrow deeps.
—To towns, whose shades of no rude noise[1] complain,
From ringing team apart[2] and grating wain—
To flat-roofed towns, that touch the water's bound,
Or lurk in woody sunless glens profound,
Or, from the bending rocks, obtrusive cling,
And o'er the whitened wave their shadows fling—
The pathway leads, as round the steeps it twines;[3]
And Silence loves its purple roof of vines.
The loitering traveller[4] hence, at evening, sees
From rock-hewn steps the sail between the trees;
Or marks, 'mid opening cliffs, fair dark-eyed maids
Tend the small harvest of their garden glades;
Or stops the solemn mountain-shades to view
Stretch o'er the pictured mirror broad and blue,
And track the yellow lights from steep to steep,
As up the opposing hills they slowly creep.[5]

[1] 1836.
. . . . sound . 1815.

[2] 1836.
To ringing team unknown . . . . . 1815.

[3] 1827.
Wild round the steeps the little pathway twines, 1815.

[4] 1836.
The viewless lingerer . . . . . . 1815.

[5] 1845.
Tracking the yellow sun from steep to steep,
As up the opposing hills, with tortoise foot, they creep.
1815.
And track the yellow light . . . . . 1836.
. . . . . . on naked steeps
As up the opposing hill it slowly creeps. C.

* Name of one of the valleys of the Chartreuse.—W. W. 1793.

Aloft, here, half a village shines, arrayed
In golden light;[1] half hides itself in shade:
While, from amid the darkened roofs, the spire,
Restlessly flashing, seems to mount like fire:[2]
There, all unshaded, blazing forests throw
Rich golden verdure on the lake[3] below.
Slow glides the sail along the illumined shore,
And steals into the shade the lazy oar;
Soft bosoms breathe around contagious sighs,
And amorous music on the water dies.

How blest, delicious scene! the eye that greets
Thy open beauties, or thy lone retreats;
Beholds the unwearied sweep of wood that scales
Thy cliffs; the endless waters of thy vales;[4]
Thy lowly cots that sprinkle all the shore,[5]
Each with its[6] household boat beside the door;
[7] Thy torrents shooting from the clear-blue sky;

---

[1] 1845.
Here half a village shines, in gold arrayed,
Bright as the moon; . . . . . . 1815.

[2] 1827.
From the dark sylvan roofs the restless spire
Inconstant glancing, mounts like springing fire. 1815.

[3] 1836.
. . . . the waves . . . 1815.

[4] 1836.
Th' unwearied sweep of wood thy cliffs that scales;
The never-ending waters of thy vales; 1815.

[5] 1836. Line 111 was previously three lines, thus—
The cots, those dim religious groves embower,
Or, under rocks that from the water tower
Insinuated, sprinkling all the shore, 1815.

[6] 1836.
. . . his . . . . . . 1815.

[7] 1836.
Whose flaccid sails in forms fantastic droop,
Bright'ning the gloom where thick the forests stoop;
Only in the editions 1815 to 1832.

Thy towns, that cleave, like swallows' nests, on high ;[1]
That glimmer hoar in eve's last light descried
Dim from the twilight water's shaggy side,
Whence lutes and voices down the enchanted woods
Steal, and compose the oar-forgotten floods ;
[2]—Thy lake, that, streaked or dappled, blue or grey,
'Mid smoking woods gleams hid from morning's ray[3]
Slow-travelling down the western hills, to' enfold[4]
Its green-tinged margin in a blaze of gold ;
Thy glittering steeples, whence the matin bell
Calls forth the woodman from his desert cell,
And quickens the blithe sound of oars that pass
Along the steaming lake, to early mass.[5]
But now farewell to each and all—adieu
To every charm, and last and chief to you,[6]
Ye lovely maidens that in noontide shade

---

[1] 1827.

. . like swallows' nests that cleave on high ;
1815.

[2] 1827.

While Evening's solemn bird melodious weeps,
Heard, by star-spotted bays, beneath the steeps ;
Only in the editions of 1815 and 1820.

[3] 1836.

—Thy lake, mid smoking woods, that blue and grey
Gleams, streaked or dappled, hid from morning's ray
1815.

As beautiful the flood where blue or grey
Dappled, or streaked, as hid from morning's ray. C.

[4] 1836.

. . . . to fold 1815.

[5] 1836.

From thickly-glittering spires the matin bell
Calling the woodman from his desert cell,
A summons to the sound of oars, that pass,
Spotting the steaming deeps, to early mass ;
Slow swells the service o'er the water born,
While fill each pause the ringing woods of morn. 1815.

Calls forth the woodman with its cheerful knell. C.

[6] This couplet was first added in 1845.

Rest near your little plots of wheaten glade;[1]
To all that binds[2] the soul in powerless trance,
Lip-dewing song, and ringlet-tossing dance;
Where sparkling eyes and breaking smiles illume
The sylvan cabin's lute-enlivened gloom.
—Alas! the very murmur of the streams
Breathes o'er the failing soul voluptuous dreams,
While Slavery, forcing the sunk mind to dwell
On joys that might disgrace the captive's cell,
Her shameless timbrel shakes on Como's marge,
And lures[3] from bay to bay the vocal barge.

Yet are thy softer arts with power indued
To soothe and cheer the poor man's solitude.
By silent cottage-doors, the peasant's home
Left vacant for the day, I loved to roam.[4]
But once I pierced the mazes of a wood

---

[1] 1845.
Farewell those forms that in thy noon-tide shade,
Rest, near their little plots of wheaten glade; 1820.

Ye lovely forms that in the noontide shade
Rest near their little plots of wheaten glade. C.

[2] 1845.
Those charms that bind . . . . . 1820.

[3] 1836.
And winds, ... 1820.

[4] 1836.
Yet arts are thine that soothe the unquiet heart,
And smiles to Solitude and Want impart.
I lov'd, 'mid thy most desart woods astray,
With pensive step to measure my slow way,
By lonely, silent cottage-doors to roam,
The far-off peasant's day-deserted home, 1820.

I loved by silent cottage-doors to roam,
The far-off peasant's day-deserted home; 1827.

These two lines take the place of the second and third couplets of the 1820 text quoted above.

In which a cabin undeserted stood;[1]
There an old man an olden measure scanned
On a rude viol touched with withered hand.[2]
As lambs or fawns in April clustering lie[3]
Under a hoary oak's thin canopy,
Stretched at his feet, with stedfast upward eye,
His children's children listened to the sound;[4]
—A Hermit with his family around!

But let us hence; for fair Locarno smiles
Embowered in walnut slopes and citron isles:
Or seek at eve the banks of Tusa's stream,
Where,[5] 'mid dim towers and woods, her * waters gleam.
From the bright wave, in solemn gloom, retire
The dull-red steeps, and, darkening still, aspire
To where afar rich orange lustres glow
Round undistinguished clouds, and rocks, and snow:
Or, led where Via Mala's chasms confine
The indignant waters of the infant Rhine,

---

[1] 1836.
Once did I pierce to where a cabin stood;
The red-breast peace had buried it in wood, 1820.

And once I pierced the mazes of a wood,
Where, far from public haunt, a cabin stood; 1827.

[2] 1836.
There, by the door a hoary-headed Sire
Touched with his withered hand an ancient lyre; 1820.

[3] 1836.
This and the following line were expanded from
Beneath an old-grey oak, as violets lie, 1820.

[4] 1836.
. . . . joined the holy sound; 1820.

[5] 1836.
While, ... 1820.

---

* The river along whose banks you descend in crossing the Alps by the Simplon Pass.—W. W. 1793.

Hang o'er the abyss, whose else impervious gloom[1]
His burning eyes with fearful light illume.

The mind condemned, without reprieve, to go
O'er life's long deserts with its charge of woe,
With sad congratulation joins the train
Where beasts and men together o'er the plain
Move on—a mighty caravan of pain:
Hope, strength, and courage, social suffering brings,
Freshening the wilderness with shades and springs.
—There be whose lot far otherwise is cast:
Sole human tenant of the piny waste,[2]
By choice or doom a gipsy wanders here,
A nursling babe her only comforter;
Lo, where she sits beneath yon shaggy rock,
A cowering shape half hid in curling smoke![3]

When lightning among clouds and mountain-snows
Predominates, and darkness comes and goes,
And the fierce torrent, at the flashes broad

---

[1] 1845.

Bend o'er th' abyss, the else impervious gloom 1820.
Hang o'er th' abyss:— . . . . . . 1827.
. . the abyss:— . . . . . . 1832.

[2] 1836.

Freshening the waste of sand with shades and springs.
—*She*, solitary, through the desart drear
Spontaneous wanders, hand in hand with Fear. 1820.

By choice or doom a gipsy wanders here,
Companionless, or hand in hand with fear;
Lo! where she sits beneath yon shaggy rock,
A cowering shape half-seen through curling smoke.
MS.

[3] 1836.

The Grison gypsey here her tent hath placed,
Sole human tenant of the piny waste;
Her tawny skin, dark eyes, and glossy locks,
Bend o'er the smoke that curls beneath the rocks.* 1820.

---

* In the editions of 1820 to 1832 the four lines beginning "The Grison gypsey," etc., precede those beginning "The mind condemned," etc.—Ed.

Starts, like a horse, beside the glaring road—
She seeks a covert from the battering shower
In the roofed bridge * ; the bridge, in that dread hour,
Itself all trembling at the torrent's power.[1]

Nor is she more at ease on some *still* night,
When not a star supplies the comfort of its light ;
Only the waning moon hangs dull and red
Above a melancholy mountain's head,
Then sets. In total gloom the Vagrant sighs,

---

[1] 1845. Lines 179-185 were substituted in 1845 for
A giant moan along the forest swells
Protracted, and the twilight storm foretels,
And, ruining from the cliffs, their deafening load
Tumbles,—the wildering Thunder slips abroad ;
On the high summits Darkness comes and goes,
Hiding their fiery clouds, their rocks, and snows ;
The torrent, traversed by the lustre broad,
Starts like a horse beside the flashing road ;
In the roofed bridge, at that terrific hour,
She seeks a shelter from the battering show'r.
—Fierce comes the river down ; the crashing wood
Gives way, and half it's pines torment the flood ;
† Fearful, beneath, the Water-spirits call,
And the bridge vibrates, tottering to its fall. 1820.

When rueful moans along the forest swell
Protracted, and the twilight storm foretel,
And, headlong from the cliffs, a deafening load
Tumbles,—and wildering thunder slips abroad ;
When on the summits Darkness comes and goes,
Hiding their fiery clouds, their rocks, and snows ;
And the fierce torrent, from the lustre broad,
Starts, like a horse beside the flashing road—
She seeks a covert from the battering shower
In the roofed bridge ; the bridge, in that dread hour,
Itself all quaking at the torrent's power. 1836.

---

* Most of the bridges among the Alps are of wood and covered : these bridges have a heavy appearance, and rather injure the effect of the scenery in some places.—W. W. 1793.

† In the edition of 1793 Wordsworth put the following note :—
" Red came the river down, and loud, and oft
The angry Spirit of the water shriek'd." (HOME's *Douglas.*)
See Act III. l. 86 ; or p. 32 in the edition of 1757.—ED.

Stoops her sick head, and shuts her weary eyes;
Or on her fingers counts the distant clock,
Or, to the drowsy crow of midnight cock,
Listens, or quakes while from the forest's gulf
Howls near and nearer yet the famished wolf.[1]

---

[1] 1845. Lines 186-195 were substituted in 1845 for
—Heavy, and dull, and cloudy is the night;
No star supplies the comfort of it's light,
Glimmer the dim-lit Alps, dilated, round,
And one sole light shifts in the vale profound;[2]
While,[3] opposite, the waning moon hangs still,
And red, above her[4] melancholy hill.
By the deep quiet gloom appalled, she sighs,[5]
Stoops her sick head, and shuts her weary eyes.
She hears, upon the mountain forest's brow,
The death-dog, howling loud and long, below;
—Breaking th' ascending roar of desert floods,
And insect buzz, that stuns the sultry woods,[6]
On viewless fingers[7] counts the valley-clock,
Followed by drowsy crow of midnight cock.
—Bursts from the troubled larch's giant boughs
The pie, and, chattering, breaks the night's repose.[8]
The dry leaves stir as with the serpent's walk,
And, far beneath, Banditti voices talk;
Behind her hill,[9] the Moon, all crimson, rides,
And his red eyes the slinking Water hides.
—Vexed by the darkness, from the piny gulf
Ascending, nearer howls the famished wolf,[10]
While thro' the stillness scatters wild dismay
Her babe's small cry, that leads him to his prey. 1820.

[2] A single taper in the vale profound
Shifts, while the Alps dilated glimmer round; 1832.

[3] And, ... 1832.

[4] . . . . above yon . . . . 1836.

[5] By the deep gloom appalled, the Vagrant sighs, 1836.

[6] This couplet was cancelled in the edition of 1827.

[7] Or on her fingers . . . . 1836.

[8] This couplet was withdrawn in 1827.

[9] Behind the hill . . . . 1836.

[10] Near and yet nearer, from the piny gulf
Howls, by the darkness vexed, the famished wolf, 1836.

From the green vale of Urseren smooth and wide
Descend we now, the maddened Reuss our guide;[1]
By rocks that, shutting out the blessed day,
Cling tremblingly to rocks as loose as they;
By cells * upon whose image, while he prays,
The kneeling peasant scarcely dares to gaze;
By many a votive death-cross † planted near,
And watered duly with the pious tear,
That faded silent from the upward eye
Unmoved with each rude form of peril nigh;[2]
Fixed on the anchor left by Him who saves
Alike in whelming snows, and roaring waves.

---

[1] 1836.

Now, passing Urseren's open vale serene,
Her quiet streams, and hills of downy green,
Plunge with the Russ embrowned by Terror's breath,
Where danger roofs the narrow walks of death; 1815.

Plunge where the Reuss with fearless might has rent
His headlong way along a dark descent. MS.

In the edition of 1836 these two couplets of 1815 were compressed into one, and in that edition lines 200-201 preceded lines 198-199. They were transposed in 1840.

[2] 1836.

By floods, that, thundering from their dizzy height,
Swell more gigantic on the stedfast sight;
Black drizzling crags, that beaten by the din,
Vibrate, as if a voice complained within;
Bare steeps, where Desolation stalks afraid,
Unstedfast, by a blasted yew unstayed;
By cells whose image, trembling as he prays,
Awe-struck, the kneeling peasant scarce surveys;
Loose hanging rocks the Day's bless'd eye that hide,
And crosses reared to Death on every side,
Which with cold kiss Devotion planted near,
And bending water'd with the human tear;
That faded "silent" from her upward eye,
Unmoved with each rude form of Danger nigh, 1815.

---

* The Catholic religion prevails here; these cells are, as is well known, very common in the Catholic countries, planted, like the Roman tombs, along the roadside.—W. W. 1793.

† Crosses commemorative of the deaths of travellers by the fall of snow and other accidents very common along this dreadful road.—W. W. 1793.

But soon a peopled region on the sight
Opens—a little world of calm delight;[1]
Where mists, suspended on the expiring gale,
Spread roof like o'er the deep secluded vale,[2]
And beams of evening slipping in between,
Gently illuminate a sober scene:—[3]
Here, on the brown wood-cottages * they sleep,[4]
There, over rock or sloping pasture creep.[5]
On as we journey, in clear view displayed,
The still vale lengthens underneath its shade
Of low-hung vapour: on the freshened mead
The green light sparkles;—the dim bowers recede.[6]
While pastoral pipes and streams the landscape lull,

[1] 1836.
On as we move a softer prospect opes,
Calm huts, and lawns between, and sylvan slopes. 1815.

[2] 1845.
While mists, suspended on the expiring gale,
Moveless o'er-hang the deep secluded vale, 1815.
Where mists, ... 1836.
Where mists suspended on the evening gale,
Spread roof-like o'er a deep secluded vale, C.
Given to clear view beneath a hoary veil
Of mists suspended on the evening gale. MS.

[3] 1836.
The beams of evening, slipping soft between,
Light up of tranquil joy a sober scene. 1815.
Gently illuminate a sober scene; 1827.

[4] In the editions 1815-1832 ll. 214, 215 follow, instead of preceding, ll. 216-219.

[5] 1845.
On the low brown wood-huts delighted sleep
Along the brightened gloom reposing deep. 1815.
Here, on the brown wood-cottages they sleep,
There, over lawns and sloping woodlands creep. 1836.
There, over lawn or sloping pasture creep. C.

[6] 1845.
Winding its dark-green wood and emerald glade,
The still vale lengthens underneath the shade;

* The houses in the more retired Swiss valleys are all built of wood.—W. W. 1793.

And bells of passing mules that tinkle dull,
In solemn shapes before the admiring eye
Dilated hang the misty pines on high,
Huge convent domes with pinnacles and towers,
And antique castles seen through gleamy[1] showers.

From such romantic dreams, my soul, awake!
To sterner pleasure, where, by Uri's lake
In Nature's pristine majesty outspread,
Winds neither road nor path for foot to tread:[2]
The rocks rise naked as a wall, or stretch,
Far o'er the water, hung with groves of beech;[3]
Aerial pines from loftier steeps ascend,
Nor stop but where creation seems to end.[4]
Yet here and there, if 'mid the savage scene
Appears a scanty plot of smiling green,
Up from the lake a zigzag path will creep

While in soft gloom the scattering bowers recede,
Green dewy lights adorn the freshened mead, 1815.

Winding its darksome wood and emerald glade,
The still vale lengthens underneath the shade
Of low-hung vapour: on the freshened mead
The green light sparkles;—the dim bowers recede. 1836.

1 1836.
. . . . drizzling . 1815.

2 1845.
. . . . my soul awake,
Lo! Fear looks silent down on Uri's lake;
Where by the unpathwayed margin still and dread
Was never heard the plodding peasant's tread: 1815.

3 1845.
Tower like a wall the naked rocks, or reach
Far o'er the secret water dark with beech; 1815.

Tower-like rise up the naked rocks, or stretch 1836.

4 1845.
More high, to where creation seems to end,
Shade above shade the desert pines ascend. 1815.

. . . . . the aërial pines . 1820.

Shade above shade, the aërial pines ascend,
Nor stop but where creation seems to end. 1836.

To reach a small wood-hut hung boldly on the steep.[1]
—Before those thresholds (never can they know[2]
The face of traveller passing to and fro,)
No peasant leans upon his pole, to tell
For whom at morning tolled the funeral bell;
Their watch-dog ne'er his angry bark foregoes,
Touched by the beggar's moan of human woes;
The shady porch ne'er offered a cool seat
To pilgrims overcome by summer's heat.[3]
Yet thither the world's business finds its way
At times, and tales unsought beguile the day,
And *there* are those fond thoughts which Solitude,[4]
However stern, is powerless to exclude.[5]
There doth the maiden watch her lover's sail
Approaching, and upbraid the tardy gale;

[1] 1845. (Compressing eight lines into four.)
Yet, with his infants, man undaunted creeps
And hangs his small wood-hut upon the steeps,
Where'er, below, amid the savage scene
Peeps out a little speck of smiling green.
A garden-plot the mountain air perfumes,
Mid the dark pines a little orchard blooms;
A zig-zag path from the domestic skiff,
Threading the painful crag, surmounts the cliff. 1815.
. . . . . wood-cabin on the steeps. 1820.
. . . . . the desert air perfumes, 1820.
Thridding the painful crag, . . . 1832.
Yet, wheresoe'er amid the savage scene
Peeps out a little spot of smiling green,
Man with his babes undaunted thither creeps,
And hangs his small wood-hut upon the steeps.
A garden-plot . . . . 1836.

[2] 1845.
—Before those hermit doors, that never know 1815.
—Before those lonesome doors, . . 1836.

[3] 1845.
The grassy seat beneath their casement shade
The pilgrim's wistful eye hath never stayed. 1815.
The shady porch ne'er offered a cool seat
To pilgrims overpowered by summer's heat. 1836.

[4] and [5] See Appendix III.—ED.

At midnight listens till his parting oar,
And its last echo, can be heard no more.[1]

And what if ospreys, cormorants, herons cry,
Amid tempestuous vapours driving by,[2]
Or hovering over wastes too bleak to rear
That common growth of earth, the foodful ear;[3]
Where the green apple shrivels on the spray,
And pines the unripened pear in summer's kindliest ray;[4]

[1] 1845. Lines 246 to 253 were previously—
—There, did the iron Genius not disdain
The gentle Power that haunts the myrtle plain,
There might the love-sick Maiden sit, and chide
Th' insuperable rocks and severing tide,
There watch at eve her Lover's sun-gilt sail
Approaching, and upbraid the tardy gale,
There list at midnight, till is heard no more,
Below, the echo of his parting oar,
There hang in fear, when growls the frozen stream,*
To guide his dangerous tread, the taper's gleam. 1815.

There might the maiden chide, in love-sick mood,
The insuperable rocks and severing flood; 1836.

At midnight listen till his parting oar,
And its last echo, can be heard no more. 1836.

Yet tender thoughts dwell there, no solitude
Hath power youth's natural feelings to exclude;
There doth the maiden watch her lover's sail
Approaching, and upbraid the tardy gale. C.

[2] 1845.
Mid stormy vapours ever driving by,
Where ospreys, cormorants, and herons cry; 1815.

Where ospreys, cormorants, and herons cry,
'Mid stormy vapours ever driving by, 1836.

[3] 1836.
Where hardly given the hopeless waste to cheer,
Denied the bread of life the foodful ear, 1815.

Hovering o'er rugged wastes too bleak to rear
That common growth of earth, the foodful ear; 1820.

[4] 1820.
Dwindles the pear on autumn's latest spray,
And apple sickens pale in summer's ray; 1815.

* This and the following line are only in the editions of 1815 and 1820.—Ed.

Contentment shares the desolate domain[1]
With Independence, child of high Disdain.
Exulting 'mid the winter of the skies,
Shy as the jealous chamois, Freedom flies,
And grasps by fits her sword, and often eyes;
And sometimes, as from rock to rock she bounds
The Patriot nymph starts at imagined sounds,
And, wildly pausing, oft she hangs aghast,
Whether some old Swiss air hath checked her haste
Or thrill of Spartan fife is caught between the blast.[2]

Swoln with incessant rains from hour to hour,[3]
All day the floods a deepening murmur pour:
The sky is veiled, and every cheerful sight:
Dark is the region as with coming night;
But what a sudden burst of overpowering light!
Triumphant on the bosom of the storm,
Glances the wheeling eagle's glorious form![4]
Eastward, in long perspective glittering, shine
The wood-crowned cliffs that o'er the lake recline;

---

[1] 1845.
Ev'n here Content has fixed her smiling reign 1815.

[2] 1845.
And often grasps her sword, and often eyes:
Her crest a bough of Winter's bleakest pine,
Strange "weeds" and alpine plants her helm entwine,
And wildly-pausing oft she hangs aghast,
While thrills the "Spartan fife" between the blast. 1815.

Flowers of the loftiest Alps her helm entwine;
And, wildly pausing, oft she hangs aghast,
As thrills . . . . 1836.

And oft at Fancy's call she stands aghast,
As if some old Swiss air had checked her haste,
Or thrill of Spartan fife were caught between the blast. C.

[3] 1845.
'Tis storm; and, hid in mist from hour to hour, 1815.

[4] 1845.
Glances the fire-clad eagle's wheeling form; 1815.
. . . . . . glorious form; 1836.

Those lofty cliffs a hundred streams unfold,[1]
At once to pillars turned that flame with gold:
Behind his sail the peasant shrinks, to shun
The *west*,[2] that burns like one dilated sun,
A crucible of mighty compass, felt
By mountains, glowing till they seem to melt.[3]

But, lo! the boatman, overawed, before
The pictured fane of Tell suspends his oar;
Confused the Marathonian tale appears,
While his eyes sparkle with heroic tears.[4]
And who, that walks where men of ancient days
Have wrought with godlike arm the deeds of praise,
Feels not the spirit of the place control,
Or rouse[5] and agitate his labouring soul?
Say, who, by thinking on Canadian hills,
Or wild Aosta lulled by Alpine rills,
On Zutphen's plain; or on that highland dell,
Through which rough Garry cleaves his way, can tell
What high resolves exalt the tenderest thought
Of him whom passion rivets to the spot,[6]

---

[1] 1845.
Wide o'er the Alps a hundred streams unfold, 1815.
Those eastern cliffs . . . . . 1836.

[2] 1845.
. . . . strives to shun
The west . . . . 1815.
. . . . tries to shun
The *west*, ... 1836.

[3] 1845.
Where in a mighty crucible expire
The mountains, glowing hot, like coals of fire. 1815.

[4] 1836.
While burn in his full eyes the glorious tears. 1820.

[5] 1836.
Exalt, and agitate . . . . . . 1820.

[6] 1836.
On Zutphen's plain; or where, with soften'd gaze,
The old grey stones the plaided chief surveys;
Can guess the high resolve, the cherished pain
Of him whom passion rivets to the plain, 1820.

Where breathed the gale that caught Wolfe's happiest
    sigh,
And the last sunbeam fell on Bayard's eye;
Where bleeding Sidney from the cup retired,
And glad Dundee in "faint huzzas" *expired?

But now with other mind I stand alone
Upon the summit of this naked cone,
And watch the fearless chamois-hunter chase
His prey, through tracts abrupt of desolate space,[1]
† Through vacant worlds where Nature never gave
A brook to murmur or a bough to wave,
Which unsubstantial Phantoms sacred keep;
Thro' worlds where Life, and Voice, and Motion sleep;
Where silent Hours their death-like sway extend,
Save when the avalanche breaks loose, to rend
Its way with uproar, till the ruin, drowned
In some dense wood or gulf of snow profound,
Mocks the dull ear of Time with deaf abortive sound.[2]
—'Tis his, while wandering on from height to height,
To see a planet's pomp and steady light
In the least star of scarce-appearing night;
While the pale moon moves near him, on the bound

---

[1] 1836.
And watch, from pike to pike, amid the sky
Small as a bird the chamois-chaser fly, 1820.

[2] 1836.
Thro' worlds where Life, and Sound, and Motion sleep;
Where Silence still her death-like reign extends,
Save when the startling cliff unfrequent rends:
In the deep snow the mighty ruin drowned,
Mocks the dull ear . . . . . . 1820.

---

* See Burns's *Postscript* to his *Cry and Prayer*:
And when he fa's,
His latest draught o' breathin' leaves him
In faint huzzas.—Ed.

† For most of the images in the next sixteen verses I am indebted to M. Raymond's interesting observations annexed to his translation of Coxe's *Tour in Switzerland*.—W. W. 1793.

Of ether, shining with diminished round,[1]
And far and wide the icy summits blaze,
Rejoicing in the glory of her rays:
To him the day-star glitters small and bright,
Shorn of its beams, insufferably white,
And he can look beyond the sun, and view
Those fast-receding depths of sable blue
Flying till vision can no more pursue![2]
—At once bewildering mists around him close,
And cold and hunger are his least of woes;
The Demon of the snow, with angry roar
Descending, shuts for aye his prison door.
Soon with despair's whole weight his spirits sink;
Bread has he none, the snow must be his drink;
And, ere his eyes can close upon the day,[3]
The eagle of the Alps o'ershades her prey.

Now couch thyself where, heard with fear afar,[4]
Thunders through echoing pines the headlong Aar;
Or rather stay to taste the mild delights
Of pensive Underwalden's * pastoral heights.
—Is there who 'mid these awful wilds has seen
The native Genii walk the mountain green?
Or heard, while other worlds their charms reveal,

---

[1] 1836.
While the near moon, that coasts the vast profound,
Wheels pale and silent her diminished round, 1820.

[2] 1827.
Flying more fleet than vision can pursue! 1820.

[3] 1836.
Then with Despair's whole weight his spirits sink,
No bread to feed him, and the snow his drink,
While, ere his eyes . . . . . . 1820.

[4] 1836.
Hence shall we turn where, heard with fear afar, 1820.

---

* The people of this Canton are supposed to be of a more melancholy disposition than the other inhabitants of the Alps: this, if true, may proceed from their living more secluded.—W. W. 1793.

Soft music o'er[1] the aërial summit steal?
While o'er the desert, answering every close,
Rich steam of sweetest perfume comes and goes.
—And sure there is a secret Power that reigns
Here, where no trace of man the spot profanes,
Nought but the *chalets*,* flat and bare, on high
Suspended 'mid the quiet of the sky;
Or distant herds that pasturing upward creep,
And, not untended, climb the dangerous steep.[2]
How still! no irreligious sound or sight
Rouses the soul from her severe delight.
An idle voice the sabbath region fills
Of Deep that calls to Deep across the hills,
And with that voice accords the soothing sound[3]
Of drowsy bells, for ever tinkling round;
Faint wail of eagle melting into blue
Beneath the cliffs, and pine-woods' steady *sugh;* †
The solitary heifer's deepened low;
Or rumbling, heard remote, of falling snow.
All motions, sounds, and voices, far and nigh,
Blend in a music of tranquillity;[4]
Save when, a stranger seen below,[5] the boy
Shouts from the echoing hills with savage joy.

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[1] 1836.
. . from . . . . . . 1820.

[2] 1836.
Nought but the herds that pasturing upward creep,
Hung dim-discover'd from the dangerous steep,
Or summer hamlet, flat and bare, on high
Suspended, mid the quiet of the sky. 1815.

[3] 1836.
Broke only by the melancholy sound 1815.

[4] The two previous lines were added in 1836.

[5] 1832.
Save that, the stranger seen below, . . 1815.

---

* This picture is from the middle region of the Alps.—W. W. 1815. *Chalets* are summer huts for the Swiss herdsmen.—W. W. 1836.

† Sugh, a Scotch word expressive of the sound of the wind through the trees.—W. W. 1793.

It may be as well to add that, in this Scotch word, the "gh" is pronounced; so that, as used colloquially, the word could never rhyme with "blue."—Ed.

When, from the sunny breast of open seas,
And bays with myrtle fringed, the southern breeze
Comes on to gladden April with the sight
Of green isles widening on each snow-clad height;[1]
When shouts and lowing herds the valley fill,
And louder torrents stun the noon-tide hill,
[2] The pastoral Swiss begin the cliffs to scale,
Leaving to silence the deserted vale;[3]
And like the Patriarchs in their simple age
Move, as the verdure leads, from stage to stage;[4]
High and more high in summer's heat they go,[5]
And hear the rattling thunder far below;
Or steal beneath the mountains, half-deterred,
Where huge rocks tremble to the bellowing herd.[6]

One I behold who, 'cross the foaming flood,
Leaps with a bound of graceful hardihood;
Another high on that green ledge;—he gained
The tempting spot with every sinew strained;[7]

---

[1] 1836.
When warm from myrtle bays and tranquil seas,
Comes on, to whisper hope, the vernal breeze,
When hums the mountain bee in May's glad ear,
And emerald isles to spot the heights appear, 1815.

[2] When fragrant scents beneath th' enchanted tread
Spring up, his choicest wealth around him spread,
Inserted in the editions 1815 to 1832.

[3] 1836.
The pastoral Swiss begins the cliffs to scale,
To silence leaving the deserted vale, 1815.

[4] 1836.
Mounts, where the verdure leads, from stage to stage,
And pastures on, as in the Patriarch's age: 1815.

[5] 1836.
O'er lofty heights serene and still they go, 1815.

[6] 1836. (Omitting the first of the two following couplets.)
They cross the chasmy torrent's foam-lit bed,
Rocked on the dizzy larch's narrow tread;
Or steal beneath loose mountains, half deterr'd,
That sigh and shudder to the lowing herd. 1815.

[7] This couplet was added in the edition of 1836.

And downward thence a knot of grass he throws,
Food for his beasts in time of winter snows.[1]
—Far different life from what Tradition hoar
Transmits of happier lot in times of yore![2]
Then Summer lingered long; and honey flowed
From out the rocks, the wild bees' safe abode:[3]
Continual waters[4] welling cheered the waste,
And plants were wholesome, now of deadly taste:
Nor Winter yet his frozen stores had piled,
Usurping where the fairest herbage smiled:
Nor Hunger driven the herds from pastures bare,
To climb the treacherous cliffs for scanty fare.[5]
Then the milk-thistle flourished through the land,
And forced the full-swoln udder to demand,
Thrice every day, the pail and welcome hand.[6]
Thus does the father to his children tell
Of banished bliss, by fancy loved too well.[7]

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[1] 1836. Lines 380-385 were previously—

—I see him, up the midway cliff he creeps
To where a scanty knot of verdure peeps,
Thence down the steep a pile of grass he throws,
The fodder of his herds in winter snows. 1815.

[2] 1836.

. . . . to what tradition hoar
Transmits of days more blest . . . 1815.

[3] 1845.

Then Summer lengthened out his season bland,
And with rock-honey flowed the happy land. 1815.

Then Summer lingered long; and honey flowed
Out of the rocks, the wild bees' safe abode. 1836.

[4] 1836.

Continual fountains . . . . . . 1815.

[5] 1836.

Nor Hunger forced the herds from pastures bare
For scanty food the treacherous cliffs to dare. 1815.

[6] 1836.

Then the milk-thistle bade those herds demand
Three times a day the pail and welcome hand. 1815.

[7] 1836.

Thus does the father to his sons relate,
On the lone mountain top, their changed estate. 1815.

Alas! that human guilt provoked the rod [1]
Of angry Nature to avenge her God.
Still, Nature, ever just, to him imparts
Joys only given to uncorrupted hearts.

'Tis morn: with gold the verdant mountain glows;
More high, the snowy peaks with hues of rose.
Far-stretched beneath the many-tinted hills,
A mighty waste of mist the valley fills,
A solemn sea! whose billows wide around [2]
Stand motionless, to awful silence bound:
Pines, on the coast, through mist their tops uprear,
That like to leaning masts of stranded ships appear.
A single chasm, a gulf of gloomy blue,
Gapes in the centre of the sea—and through
That dark mysterious gulf ascending, sound
Innumerable streams with roar profound.[3]
Mount through the nearer vapours notes of birds,
And merry flageolet; the low of herds,
The bark of dogs, the heifer's tinkling bell,
Talk, laughter, and perchance a church-tower knell: [4]
Think not, the peasant from aloft has gazed

---

[1] 1836.
But human vices have provoked the rod 1815.

In the editions 1815-1832 this and the following line preceded lines 399-400. They took their final position in the edition of 1836.

[2] 1836.
. . . whose vales and mountains round 1820.

[3] 1836. (Compressing eight lines into six.)
. . . to awful silence bound.
A gulf of gloomy blue, that opens wide
And bottomless, divides the midway tide.
Like leaning masts of stranded ships appear
The pines that near the coast their summits rear;
Of cabins, woods, and lawns a pleasant shore
Bounds calm and clear the chaos still and hoar;
Loud thro' that midway gulf ascending, sound
Unnumber'd streams with hollow roar profound: 1820.

[4] 1836.
Mount thro' the nearer mist the chaunt of birds,
And talking voices, and the low of herds,

And heard with heart unmoved, with soul unraised:[1]
Nor is his spirit less enrapt, nor less
Alive to independent happiness,[2]
Then, when he lies, out-stretched, at even-tide
Upon the fragrant mountain's purple side:[3]
For as the pleasures of his simple day
Beyond his native valley seldom stray,
Nought round its darling precincts can he find
But brings some past enjoyment to his mind;
While Hope, reclining upon Pleasure's urn,[4]
Binds her wild wreaths, and whispers his return.

Once, Man entirely free, alone and wild,
Was blest as free—for he was Nature's child.
He, all superior but his God disdained,
Walked none restraining, and by none restrained:
Confessed no law but what his reason taught,
Did all he wished, and wished but what he ought.
As man in his primeval dower arrayed
The image of his glorious Sire displayed,
Even so, by faithful[5] Nature guarded, here
The traces of primeval Man appear;
The simple[6] dignity no forms debase;
The eye sublime, and surly lion-grace:

The bark of dogs, the drowsy tinkling bell,
And wild-wood mountain lutes of saddest swell. 1820.

[1] 1836.
Think not, suspended from the cliff on high,
He looks below with undelighted eye. 1820.

[2] This couplet was added in the edition of 1836.

[3] 1836.
—No vulgar joy is his, at even tide
Stretch'd on the scented mountain's purple side. 1820.

[4] 1836.
While Hope, that ceaseless leans on Pleasure's urn, 1820.

[5] 1836.
. . . by vestal . . . . . 1820.

[6] 1836.
. native . . . . 1820.

The slave of none, of beasts alone the lord,
His book he prizes, nor neglects his sword;[1]
—Well taught by that to feel his rights, prepared
With this "the blessings he enjoys to guard." *

And, as his native hills encircle ground
For many a marvellous[2] victory renowned,
The work of Freedom daring to oppose,
With few in arms, † innumerable foes,
When to those famous[3] fields his steps are led,
An unknown power connects him with the dead:
For images of other worlds are there;
Awful the light, and holy is the air.
Fitfully, and in flashes, through his soul,
Like sun-lit tempests, troubled transports roll;
His bosom heaves, his Spirit towers amain,[4]
Beyond the senses and their little reign.

And oft, when that dread vision hath past by,[5]
He holds with God himself communion high,

---

[1] 1832.
He marches with his flute, his book, and sword; 1820.

[2] 1845.
. . wonderous . . . . . 1820.

[3] 1840.
. . . . glorious . . . . . 1820.

[4] 1836.
Uncertain thro' his fierce uncultured soul
Like lighted tempests troubled transports roll;
To viewless realms his Spirit towers amain, 1820.

[5] 1836.
And oft, when pass'd that solemn vision by, 1820.

---

* See Smollett's *Ode to Leven Water* in *Humphry Clinker*, and compare *The Italian Itinerant and the Swiss Goatherd*, in "Memorials of a Tour on the Continent" in 1820, part ii. 1.—ED.

† Alluding to several battles which the Swiss in very small numbers have gained over their oppressors the house of Austria; and in particular, to one fought at Naefels near Glarus, where three hundred and thirty men defeated an army of between fifteen and twenty thousand Austrians. Scattered over the valley are to be found eleven stones, with this inscription, 1388, the year the battle was fought, marking out as I was told upon the spot, the several places where the Austrians attempting to make a stand were repulsed anew.—W. W. 1793.

There where the peal[1] of swelling torrents fills
The sky-roofed temple of the eternal hills;
Or, when upon the mountain's silent brow
Reclined, he sees, above him and below,
Bright stars of ice and azure fields of snow;
While needle peaks of granite shooting bare
Tremble in ever-varying tints of air.
And when a gathering weight of shadows brown
Falls on the valleys as the sun goes down;
And Pikes, of darkness named and fear and storms,*
Uplift in quiet their illumined forms,[2]
In sea-like reach of prospect round him spread,
Tinged like an angel's smile all rosy red—
Awe in his breast with holiest love unites,
And the near heavens impart their own delights.[3]

When downward to his winter hut he goes,
Dear and more dear the lessening circle grows;
That hut which on the hills so oft employs
His thoughts, the central point of all his joys.[4]
And as a swallow, at the hour of rest,
Peeps often ere she darts into her nest,

[1] 1836.
Where the dread peal . . . . 1820.

[2] 1836.
—When the Sun bids the gorgeous scene farewell,
Alps overlooking Alps their state up-swell;
Huge Pikes of Darkness named, of Fear and Storms,
Lift, all serene, their still, illumined forms, 1820.

[3] 1845.
—Great joy, by horror tam'd, dilates his heart,
And the near heavens their own delights impart. 1820.

In the editions 1820-1832 this couplet preceded the four lines above quoted.
Fear in his breast with holy love unites,
And the near heavens impart their own delights. 1836.

[4] 1836.
That hut which from the hills his eyes employs
So oft, the central point of all his joys, 1815.
. . . . . his eye . 1832.

* As Schreck-Horn, the pike of terror. Wetter-Horn, the pike of storms, etc., etc.—W. W. 1793.

So to the homestead, where the grandsire tends
A little prattling child, he oft descends,
To glance a look upon the well-matched pair;[1]
Till storm and driving ice blockade him there.
There,[2] safely guarded by the woods behind,
He hears the chiding of the baffled wind,
Hears Winter calling all his terrors round,
And, blest within himself, he shrinks not from the sound.[3]

Through Nature's vale his homely pleasures glide,
Unstained by envy, discontent, and pride;
The bound of all his vanity, to deck,
With one bright bell, a favourite heifer's neck;
Well pleased[4] upon some simple annual feast,
Remembered half the year and hoped the rest,
If dairy-produce, from his inner hoard,
Of thrice ten summers dignify[5] the board.
—Alas! in every clime a flying ray
Is all we have to cheer our wintry way;
[6]

[1] 1836.

And as a swift, by tender cares opprest,
Peeps often ere she dart into her nest,
So to the untrodden floor, where round him looks
His father, helpless as the babe he rocks,
Oft he descends to nurse the brother pair, 1820.

[2] 1820.

Where, ... 1815.

[3] 1836.

Rush down the living rocks with whirlwind sound. 1815.

[4] 1820.

Content . . . . 1815.

[5] 1836.

. . . . . . consecrate . . 1815.

[6] The following lines were erased in 1836, and in all subsequent editions:

"Here," cried a swain, whose venerable head
Bloom'd with the snow-drops of Man's narrow bed,
Last night, while by his dying fire, as clos'd
The day, in luxury my limbs repos'd,
"Here Penury oft from misery's mount will guide
Ev'n to the summer door his icy tide,
And here the avalanche of Death destroy
The little cottage of domestic Joy. 1793.

And here the unwilling mind[1] may more than trace
The general sorrows of the human race:
The churlish gales of penury, that blow
Cold as the north-wind o'er a waste of snow,[2]
To them[3] the gentle groups of bliss deny
That on the noon-day bank of leisure lie.
Yet more;—compelled by Powers which only deign
That *solitary* man disturb their reign,
Powers that support an unremitting[4] strife
With all the tender charities of life,
Full oft the father, when his sons have grown
To manhood, seems their title to disown;[5]
And from his nest[6] amid the storms of heaven
Drives, eagle-like, those sons as he was driven;
With stern composure[7] watches to the plain—
And never, eagle-like, beholds again!

When long familiar joys are all resigned,
Why does their sad remembrance haunt the mind?[8]

. . a Swain, upon whose hoary head
The "blossoms of the grave" were thinly spread, 1820.
. . a thoughtful Swain, upon whose head 1827.

[1] 1836.
But, ah! the unwilling mind . . . . 1820.

[2] 1836.
The churlish gales, that unremitting blow
Cold from necessity's continual snow, 1820.

[3] 1836.
To us . . . . 1820.

[4] 1836.
. . . . a never-ceasing . . 1820.

[5] 1836.
The father, as his sons of strength become
To pay the filial debt, for food to roam, 1820.

[6] 1836.
From his bare nest . . . . . . 1820.

[7] 1836.
His last dread pleasure! watches . . . 1820.

[8] 1836.
When the poor heart has all its joys resigned,
Why does their sad remembrance cleave behind? 1820.

Lo! where through flat Batavia's willowy groves,
Or by the lazy Seine, the exile roves;
O'er the curled waters Alpine measures swell,
And search the affections to their inmost cell;
Sweet poison spreads along the listener's veins,
Turning past pleasures into mortal pains;[1]
Poison, which not a frame of steel can brave,
Bows his young head with sorrow to the grave.*

Gay lark of hope, thy silent song resume!
Ye flattering eastern lights, once more the hills illume![2]
Fresh[3] gales and dews of life's delicious morn,
And thou, lost fragrance of the heart, return!
Alas! the little joy to man allowed,
Fades like the lustre of an evening cloud;[4]
Or like the beauty in a flower installed,
Whose season was, and cannot be recalled.
Yet, when opprest by sickness, grief, or care,
And taught that pain is pleasure's natural heir,
We still confide in more than we can know;
Death would be else the favourite friend of woe.[5]

[1] 1836.
Soft o'er the waters mournful measures swell,
Unlocking tender thought's "memorial cell";
Past pleasures are transformed to mortal pains
And poison spreads along the listener's veins. 1820.
While poison . . . . 1827.

[2] 1836.
Fair smiling lights the purpled hills illume! 1815.

[3] 1836.
Soft . . . . 1815.

[4] 1836.
Soon flies the little joy to man allowed,
And grief before him travels like a cloud: 1815.

[5] 1836. (Expanding four lines into six.)
For come Diseases on, and Penury's rage,
Labour, and Care, and Pain, and dismal Age,
Till, Hope-deserted, long in vain his breath
Implores the dreadful untried sleep of Death. 1815.

* The effect of the famous air called in French Ranz des Vaches upon the Swiss troops.—W. W. 1793.

'Mid savage rocks, and seas of snow that shine,
Between interminable tracts of pine,
Within a temple stands an awful shrine,[1]
By an uncertain light revealed, that falls
On the mute Image and the troubled walls.
Oh! give not me that eye of hard disdain
That views, undimmed, Ensiedlen's * wretched fane.
While ghastly faces through the gloom appear,[2]
Abortive joy, and hope that works in fear;[3]
While prayer contends with silenced agony,[4]
Surely in other thoughts contempt may die.
If the sad grave of human ignorance bear
One flower of hope—oh, pass and leave it there! †

The tall sun, pausing[5] on an Alpine spire,
Flings o'er the wilderness a stream of fire:
Now meet we other pilgrims ere the day[6]

[1] 1836.
A Temple stands; which holds an awful shrine, 1815.

[2] 1836.
Pale, dreadful faces round the Shrine appear, 1815.

[3] 1836. After this line the editions of 1815-1832 have the following couplet:—
While strives a secret Power to hush the crowd,
Pain's wild rebellious burst proclaims her rights aloud.
and this is followed by lines 545-6 of the final text.

[4] 1836. From 1815 to 1832, the following two couplets followed line 546. The first of these was withdrawn in 1836.
Mid muttering prayers all sounds of torment meet,
Dire clap of hands, distracted chafe of feet;
While loud and dull ascends the weeping cry,
Surely in other thoughts contempt may die. 1815.

[5] 1836.
—The tall Sun, tiptoe . . . . . 1820.

[6] 1836.
At such an hour there are who love to stray,
And meet the advancing Pilgrims ere the day 1820.
Now let us meet the Pilgrims ere the day
Close on the remnant of their weary way; 1827.

* This shrine is resorted to, from a hope of relief, by multitudes, from every corner of the Catholick world, labouring under mental or bodily afflictions.—W. W. 1793.

† Compare the Stanzas *Composed in one of the Catholic Cantons*, in the "Memorials of a Tour on the Continent" (1820), which refer to Einsiedlen.—Ed.

Close on the remnant of their weary way;
While they are drawing toward the sacred floor
Where, so they fondly think, the worm shall gnaw no more.[1]
How gaily murmur and how sweetly taste
The fountains * reared for them[2] amid the waste!
Their thirst they slake:—they wash their toil-worn feet,
And some with tears of joy each other greet.[3]
Yes, I must[4] see you when ye first behold
Those holy turrets tipped with evening gold,
In that glad moment will for you a sigh
Be heaved, of charitable sympathy;[5]
In that glad moment when your[6] hands are prest
In mute devotion on the thankful breast!

Last, let us turn to Chamouny that shields[7]
With rocks and gloomy woods[8] her fertile fields:

---

[1] 1836.
For ye are drawing tow'rd that sacred floor,
Where the charmed worm of pain shall gnaw no more. 1820.
While they are drawing toward the sacred floor 1827.

[2] 1827.
. . . for you . . . . . 1820.

[3] 1836.
—Now with a tearful kiss each other greet,
Nor longer naked be your toil-worn feet, 1820.
There some with tearful kiss each other greet,
And some, with reverence, wash their toil-worn feet. 1827.

[4] 1836.
Yes I will see you when you first behold 1820.
. . . . . ye . . . . . 1827.

[5] This couplet was added in 1836.

[6] 1836.
. . . . . the hands . . . . 1820.

[7] 1836.
Last let us turn to where Chamoùny shields, 1820.

[8] 1827.
Bosomed in gloomy woods, ... 1820.

---

* Rude fountains built and covered with sheds for the accommodation of the pilgrims, in their ascent of the mountain.—W. W. 1793.

Five streams of ice amid her cots descend,
And with wild flowers and blooming orchards blend ;—*
A scene more fair than what the Grecian feigns
Of purple lights and ever-vernal plains ;
Here all the seasons revel hand in hand :
'Mid lawns and shades by breezy rivulets fanned,[1]
[2] They sport beneath that mountain's matchless height[3]
That holds no commerce with the summer night.*
From age to age, throughout[4] his lonely bounds
The crash of ruin fitfully resounds ;
Appalling[5] havoc ! but serene his brow,
Where daylight lingers on[6] perpetual snow ;
Glitter the stars above, and all is black below.*

What marvel then if many a Wanderer sigh,

---

[1] 1836.
Here lawns and shades by breezy rivulets fann'd,
Here all the Seasons revel hand in hand. 1820.

[2] 1836.
—Red stream the cottage-lights ; the landscape fades,
Erroneous wavering mid the twilight shades.
Inserted in the editions 1820 to 1832.

[3] 1836.
Alone ascends that Mountain named of white, 1820.
Alone ascends that Hill of matchless height, 1827.

[4] 1836.
. . . . amid . . . . 1820.

[5] 1836.
Mysterious . . . . 1820.

[6] 1836.
. . . . . . 'mid . . 1820.

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* Compare Coleridge's *Hymn before Sun-rise, in the Vale of Chamouni* :

And you, ye five wild torrents fiercely glad !
. . . .
. . . . . Who, with living flowers
Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet ?
. . . .
O struggling with the darkness all the night,
And visited all night by troops of stars,
. . . .
The Arve and Arveiron at thy base
Rave ceaselessly ;

Compare also Shelley's *Mont Blanc*.—ED.

While roars the sullen Arve in anger by,[1]
That not for thy reward, unrivall'd[2] Vale! *
Waves the ripe harvest in the autumnal gale;
That thou, the slave of slaves, art doomed to pine
And droop, while no Italian arts are thine,
To soothe or cheer, to soften or refine.[3]

Hail Freedom! whether it was mine to stray,
With shrill winds whistling round my lonely way,[4]
On[5] the bleak sides of Cumbria's heath-clad moors,
Or where dank sea-weed lashes Scotland's shores;
To scent the sweets of Piedmont's breathing rose,
And orange gale that o'er Lugano blows;
Still have I found, where Tyranny prevails,
That virtue languishes and pleasure fails,[6]
While the remotest hamlets blessings share
In thy loved[7] presence known, and only there;
Heart-blessings—outward treasures too which the eye

---

[1] 1836.
At such an hour I heaved a pensive sigh,
When roared the sullen Arve in anger by, 1820.

[2] 1836.
. . . . delicious . 1820.

[3] 1836.
Hard lot!—for no Italian arts are thine
To cheat, or chear, to soften, or refine. 1820.
To soothe or cheer, ... 1827.

[4] 1836.
Beloved Freedom! were it mine to stray,
With shrill winds roaring . . . . . 1820.

[5] 1836.
O'er . . . . 1820.

[6] 1836. (Compressing four lines into two.)
. . . . . . o'er Lugano blows;
In the wide range of many a varied round,
Fleet as my passage was, I still have found
That where proud courts their blaze of gems display,
The lilies of domestic joy decay, 1820.
That where despotic courts their gems display, 1827.

[7] 1836.
In thy dear . . . . 1820.

* See note on Coleridge's *Hymn before Sun-rise* on previous page.—ED.

Of the sun peeping through the clouds can spy,
And every passing breeze will testify.[1]
There, to the porch, belike with jasmine bound
Or woodbine wreaths, a smoother path is wound;[2]
The housewife there a brighter garden sees,
Where hum on busier wing her happy bees;[3]
On infant cheeks there fresher roses blow;
And grey-haired men look up with livelier brow,—[4]
To greet the traveller needing food and rest;
Housed for the night, or but a half-hour's guest.[5]

And oh, fair France! though now the traveller sees
Thy three-striped banner fluctuate on the breeze;[6]

---

[1] The previous three lines were added in the edition of 1836.

[2] 1836.

The casement's shed more luscious woodbine binds,
And to the door a neater pathway winds; 1820.

[3] 1836. (Compressing six lines into two.)

At early morn, the careful housewife, led
To cull her dinner from its garden bed,
Of weedless herbs a healthier prospect sees,
While hum with busier joy her happy bees;
In brighter rows her table wealth aspires,
And laugh with merrier blaze her evening fires; 1820.

[4] 1836.

Her infants' cheeks with fresher roses glow,
And wilder graces sport around their brow; 1820.

[5] 1836. (Compressing four lines into two.)

By clearer taper lit, a cleanlier board
Receives at supper hour her tempting hoard;
The chamber hearth with fresher boughs is spread,
And whiter is the hospitable bed. 1820.

[6] 1845. (Compressing four lines into two.)

And oh, fair France! though now along the shade
Where erst at will the grey-clad peasant strayed,
Gleam war's discordant garments through the trees,
And the red banner mocks the froward breeze; 1820.

. . discordant vestments through the trees,
And the red banner fluctuates in the breeze; 1827.

. . . . . though in the rural shade
Where at his will, so late, the grey-clad peasant strayed,
Now, clothed in war's discordant garb, he sees
The three-striped banner fluctuate on the breeze; 1836.

Though martial songs have banished songs of love,
And nightingales desert the village grove,[1]
Scared by the fife and rumbling drum's alarms,
And the short thunder, and the flash of arms;
That cease not till night falls, when far and nigh,
Sole sound, the Sourd * prolongs his mournful cry![2]
—Yet, hast thou found that Freedom spreads her power
Beyond the cottage-hearth, the cottage-door:
All nature smiles, and owns beneath her eyes
Her fields peculiar, and peculiar skies.
Yes, as I roamed where Loiret's waters glide
Through rustling aspens heard from side to side,
When from October clouds a milder light
Fell where the blue flood rippled into white;
Methought from every cot the watchful bird
Crowed with ear-piercing power till then unheard;
Each clacking mill, that broke the murmuring streams,
Rocked the charmed thought in more delightful dreams;
Chasing those pleasant dreams,[3] the falling leaf
Awoke a fainter sense[4] of moral grief;
The measured echo of the distant flail
Wound in more welcome cadence down the vale;
With more majestic course the water rolled,

[1] 1836.

Though now no more thy maids their voices suit
To the low-warbled breath of twilight lute,
And, heard the pausing village hum between,
No solemn songstress lull the fading green, 1820.

Though martial songs have banish'd songs of love,
And nightingales forsake the village grove, 1827.
(Compressing the four lines of 1820 into two.)

[2] 1836.

While, as Night bids the startling uproar die,
Sole sound, the Sourd renews his mournful cry! 1820.

[3] 1836.

Chasing those long long dreams, ... 1820.

[4] 1845.

. . fainter pang . . . . 1820.

* An insect so called, which emits a short, melancholy cry, heard, at the close of the summer evenings, on the banks of the Loire.—W. W. 1793.

And ripening foliage shone with richer gold.[1]
—But foes are gathering—Liberty must raise
Red on the hills her beacon's far-seen blaze;
Must bid the tocsin ring from tower to tower!—
Nearer and nearer comes the trying hour![2]
Rejoice, brave Land, though pride's perverted ire
Rouse hell's own aid, and wrap thy fields in fire:
Lo, from the flames a great and glorious birth;
As if a new-made heaven were hailing a new earth![3]
—All cannot be: the promise is too fair
For creatures doomed to breathe terrestrial air:
Yet not for this will sober reason frown
Upon that promise, nor the hope disown;
She knows that only from high aims ensue
Rich guerdons, and to them alone are due.[4]

Great God! by whom the strifes of men are weighed
In an impartial balance, give thine aid
To the just cause; and, oh! do thou preside

---

[1] 1836.
A more majestic tide * the water roll'd,
And glowed the sun-gilt groves in richer gold. 1820.

[2] 1836. (Compressing six lines into four.)
—Though Liberty shall soon, indignant, raise
Red on the hills his beacon's comet blaze;
Bid from on high his lonely cannon sound,
And on ten thousand hearths his shout rebound;
His larum-bell from village-tower to tower
Swing on the astounded ear its dull undying roar; 1820.

[3] 1836.
Yet, yet rejoice, though Pride's perverted ire
Rouze Hell's own aid, and wrap thy hills on fire!
Lo! from the innocuous flames, a lovely birth,
With its own Virtues springs another earth: 1820.

[4] 1836. Lines 646-651 were previously
Nature, as in her prime, her virgin reign
Begins, and Love and Truth compose her train;
While, with a pulseless hand, and stedfast gaze,
Unbreathing Justice her still beam surveys. 1820.

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* Compare the Sonnet entitled *The Author's Voyage down the Rhine, thirty years ago,* in the "Memorials of a Tour on the Continent' in 1820, and the note appended to it.—ED.

Over the mighty stream now spreading wide: *
So shall its waters, from the heavens supplied
In copious showers, from earth by wholesome springs,
Brood o'er the long-parched lands with Nile-like wings!
And grant that every sceptred child of clay
Who cries presumptuous, "Here the flood shall stay,"[1]
May in its progress see thy guiding hand,
And cease the acknowledged purpose to withstand;[2]
Or, swept in anger from the insulted shore,
Sink with his servile bands, to rise no more![3]

To-night, my Friend, within this humble cot
Be scorn and fear and hope alike forgot[4]
In timely sleep; and when, at break of day,
On the tall peaks the glistening sunbeams play,[5]
With a light heart our course we may renew,
The first whose footsteps print the mountain dew.[6]

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[1] 1836. (Expanding eight lines into nine.)
Oh give, great God, to Freedom's waves to ride
Sublime o'er Conquest, Avarice, and Pride,
To sweep where Pleasure decks her guilty bowers
And dark Oppression builds her thick-ribbed towers!
—Give them, beneath their breast while gladness springs
To brood the nations o'er with Nile-like wings;
And grant that every sceptred Child of clay,
Who cries, presumptuous, "here their tides shall stay," 1820.

[2] This couplet was added in 1836.

[3] 1836.
Swept in their anger from the affrighted shore,
With all his creatures sink—to rise no more! 1820.

[4] 1845.
Be the dead load of mortal ills forgot! 1820
Be fear and joyful hope alike forgot 1836.

[5] This couplet was added in 1827.

[6] 1836.
Renewing, when the rosy summits glow
At morn, our various journey, sad and slow. 1820.
With lighter heart our course we may renew,
The first whose footsteps print the mountain dew. 1827.

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* The duties upon many parts of the French rivers were so exorbitant that the poorer people, deprived of the benefit of water carriage, were obliged to transport their goods by land.—W. W. 1793.

GUILT AND SORROW;

OR, INCIDENTS UPON SALISBURY PLAIN

Composed 1791-4.—Published as *The Female Vagrant* in "Lyrical Ballads" in 1798, and as *Guilt and Sorrow* in the "Poems of Early and Late Years," and in "Poems written in Youth," in 1845, and onward.

ADVERTISEMENT,

PREFIXED TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THIS POEM, PUBLISHED IN 1842.

Not less than one-third of the following poem, though it has from time to time been altered in the expression, was published so far back as the year 1798, under the title of *The Female Vagrant*. The extract is of such length that an apology seems to be required for reprinting it here; but it was necessary to restore it to its original position, or the rest would have been unintelligible. The whole was written before the close of the year 1794, and I will detail, rather as matter of literary biography than for any other reason, the circumstances under which it was produced.

During the latter part of the summer of 1793, having passed a month in the Isle of Wight, in view of the fleet which was then preparing for sea off Portsmouth at the commencement of the war, I left the place with melancholy forebodings. The American war was still fresh in memory. The struggle which was beginning, and which many thought would be brought to a speedy close by the irresistible arms of Great Britain being added to those of the allies, I was assured in my own mind would be of long continuance, and productive of distress and misery beyond all possible calculation. This conviction was pressed upon me by having been a witness, during a long residence in revolutionary France, of the spirit which prevailed in that country. After leaving the Isle of Wight, I spent two* days in wandering on foot over Salisbury Plain, which, though cultivation was then widely spread through parts of it, had upon the whole a still more impressive appearance than it now retains.

The monuments and traces of antiquity, scattered in abund-

* In the *Prelude*, he says it was "three summer days." See book xiii. l. 337.—ED.

ance over that region, led me unavoidably to compare what we know or guess of those remote times with certain aspects of modern society, and with calamities, principally those consequent upon war, to which, more than other classes of men, the poor are subject. In those reflections, joined with some particular facts that had come to my knowledge, the following stanzas originated.

In conclusion, to obviate some distraction in the minds of those who are well acquainted with Salisbury Plain, it may be proper to say, that of the features described as belonging to it, one or two are taken from other desolate parts of England.

[Unwilling to be unnecessarily particular, I have assigned this poem to the dates 1793 and '94; but, in fact, much of the Female Vagrant's story was composed at least two years before. All that relates to her sufferings as a sailor's wife in America, and her condition of mind during her voyage home, were faithfully taken from the report made to me of her own case by a friend who had been subjected to the same trials, and affected in the same way. Mr. Coleridge, when I first became acquainted with him, was so much impressed with this poem, that it would have encouraged me to publish the whole as it then stood; but the mariner's fate appeared to me so tragical, as to require a treatment more subdued, and yet more strictly applicable in expression, than I had at first given to it. This fault was corrected nearly sixty years afterwards, when I determined to publish the whole. It may be worth while to remark, that, though the incidents of this attempt do only in a small degree produce each other, and it deviates accordingly from the general rule by which narrative pieces ought to be governed, it is not, therefore, wanting in continuous hold upon the mind, or in unity, which is effected by the identity of moral interest that places the two personages upon the same footing in the reader's sympathies. My ramble over many parts of Salisbury Plain put me, as mentioned in the preface, upon writing this poem, and left upon my mind imaginative impressions, the force of which I have felt to this day. From that district I proceeded to Bath, Bristol, and so on to the banks of the Wye; where I took again to travelling on foot. In remembrance of that part of my journey, which was in '93, I began the verses,—'Five years have passed,' etc.—I. F.]

The foregoing is the Fenwick note to *Guilt and Sorrow*. The note to *The Female Vagrant*,—which was the title under

which one-third of the longer poem appeared in all the complete editions prior to 1845—is as follows.—ED.

[I find the date of this is placed in 1792, in contradiction, by mistake, to what I have asserted in *Guilt and Sorrow*. The correct date is 1793-4. The chief incidents of it, more particularly her description of her feelings on the Atlantic, are taken from life.—I. F.]

In 1798 there were thirty stanzas in this poem; in 1802, twenty-six; in 1815, fourteen; in 1820, twenty-five. Stanzas I. to XXII., XXXV. to XXXVII., and LI. to LXXIV. occur only in the collected edition of 1842, vol. vii. (also published as "Poems, chiefly of Early and Late Years"), and in subsequent editions. Wordsworth placed *The Female Vagrant* among his "Juvenile Pieces" from 1815 to 1832. In 1836, he included it along with *Descriptive Sketches* in his Table of Contents; * but as he numbered it IV. in the text—the other poems belonging to the "Juvenile Pieces" being numbered I. II. and III.—it is clear that he meant it to remain in that class. The "Poems written in Youth," of the edition of 1845, include many others in addition to the "Juvenile Pieces" of editions 1815 to 1836.—ED.

I

A TRAVELLER on the skirt of Sarum's Plain
Pursued his vagrant way, with feet half bare;
Stooping his gait, but not as if to gain
Help from the staff he bore; for mien and air
Were hardy, though his cheek seemed worn with care
Both of the time to come, and time long fled:
Down fell in straggling locks his thin grey hair;
A coat he wore of military red
But faded, and stuck o'er with many a patch and shred.

II

While thus he journeyed, step by step led on,
He saw and passed a stately inn, full sure
That welcome in such house for him was none.
No board inscribed the needy to allure
Hung there, no bush proclaimed to old and poor
And desolate, "Here you will find a friend!"

* By an evident error, corrected in the first reprint of this edition (1840). See p. 37.—ED.

The pendent grapes glittered above the door;—
On he must pace, perchance 'till night descend,
Where'er the dreary roads their bare white lines extend.

III

The gathering clouds grew red with stormy fire,
In streaks diverging wide and mounting high;
That inn he long had passed; the distant spire,
Which oft as he looked back had fixed his eye,
Was lost, though still he looked, in the blank sky.
Perplexed and comfortless he gazed around,
And scarce could any trace of man descry,
Save cornfields stretched and stretching without bound;
But where the sower dwelt was nowhere to be found.

IV

No tree was there, no meadow's pleasant green,
No brook to wet his lip or soothe his ear;
Long files of corn-stacks here and there were seen,
But not one dwelling-place his heart to cheer.
Some labourer, thought he, may perchance be near;
And so he sent a feeble shout—in vain;
No voice made answer, he could only hear
Winds rustling over plots of unripe grain,
Or whistling thro' thin grass along the unfurrowed plain.

V

Long had he fancied each successive slope
Concealed some cottage, whither he might turn
And rest; but now along heaven's darkening cope
The crows rushed by in eddies, homeward borne.
Thus warned he sought some shepherd's spreading thorn
Or hovel from the storm to shield his head,
But sought in vain; for now, all wild, forlorn,
And vacant, a huge waste around him spread;
The wet cold ground, he feared, must be his only bed.

VI

And be it so—for to the chill night shower
And the sharp wind his head he oft hath bared;

A Sailor he, who many a wretched hour
Hath told; for, landing after labour hard,
Full long[1] endured in hope of just reward,
He to an armèd fleet was forced away
By seamen, who perhaps themselves had shared
Like fate; was hurried off, a helpless prey,
'Gainst all that in *his* heart, or theirs perhaps, said nay.

VII

For years the work of carnage did not cease,
And death's dire aspect daily he surveyed,
Death's minister; then came his glad release,
And hope returned, and pleasure fondly made
Her dwelling in his dreams. By Fancy's aid
The happy husband flies, his arms to throw
Round his wife's neck; the prize of victory laid
In her full lap, he sees such sweet tears flow
As if thenceforth nor pain nor trouble she could know.

VIII

Vain hope! for fraud took all that he had earned.
The lion roars and gluts his tawny brood
Even in the desert's heart; but he, returned,
Bears not to those he loves their needful food.
His home approaching, but in such a mood
That from his sight his children might have run,
He met a traveller, robbed him, shed his blood;
And when the miserable work was done
He fled, a vagrant since, the murderer's fate to shun.

IX

From that day forth no place to him could be
So lonely, but that thence might come a pang
Brought from without to inward misery.
Now, as he plodded on, with sullen clang
A sound of chains along the desert rang;
He looked, and saw upon a gibbet high

[1] 1845.
Three years . . . . 1842.

A human body that in irons swang,
Uplifted by the tempest whirling by;
And, hovering, round it often did a raven fly.*

X

It was a spectacle which none might view,
In spot so savage, but with shuddering pain;
Nor only did for him at once renew
All he had feared from man, but roused a train
Of the mind's phantoms, horrible as vain.
The stones, as if to cover him from day,
Rolled at his back along the living plain;
He fell, and without sense or motion lay;
But, when the trance was gone, feebly pursued[1] his way.

XI

As one whose brain habitual[2] frensy fires
Owes to the fit in which his soul hath tossed
Profounder quiet, when the fit retires,
Even so the dire phantasma which had crossed
His sense, in sudden vacancy quite lost,
Left his mind still as a deep evening stream.
Nor, if accosted now, in thought engrossed,
Moody, or inly troubled, would he seem
To traveller who might talk of any casual theme.

XII

Hurtle the clouds in deeper darkness piled,
Gone is the raven timely rest to seek;
He seemed the only creature in the wild
On whom the elements their rage might wreak;
Save that the bustard, of those regions bleak

---

[1] 1845.
. . . . rose and pursued . . 1842.

[2] 1845.
. . . . demoniac . . . 1842.

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* From a short MS. poem read to me when an under-graduate, by my schoolfellow and friend Charles Farish, long since deceased. The verses were by a brother of his, a man of promising genius, who died young.—W. W. 1842.

Charles Farish was the author of *The Minstrels of Winandermere*.—ED.

Shy tenant, seeing by the uncertain light
A man there wandering, gave a mournful shriek,
And half upon the ground, with strange affright,
Forced hard against the wind a thick unwieldy flight.

XIII

All, all was cheerless to the horizon's bound;
The weary eye—which, wheresoe'er it strays,
Marks nothing but the red sun's setting round,
Or on the earth strange lines, in former days
Left by gigantic arms—at length surveys
What seems an antique castle spreading wide;
Hoary and naked are its walls, and raise
Their brow sublime: in shelter there to bide
He turned, while rain poured down smoking on every side.

XIV

Pile of Stone-henge! so proud to hint yet keep
Thy secrets, thou that lov'st to stand and hear
The Plain resounding to the whirlwind's sweep,
Inmate of lonesome Nature's endless year;
Even if thou saw'st the giant wicker rear
For sacrifice its throngs of living men,
Before thy face did ever wretch appear,
Who in his heart had groaned with deadlier pain
Than he who, tempest-driven, thy shelter now would gain?[1]

XV

Within that fabric of mysterious form,
Winds met in conflict, each by turns supreme;
And, from the perilous ground dislodged,[2] through storm
And rain he wildered on, no moon to stream
From gulf of parting clouds one friendly beam,

---

[1] 1845.
Than he who now at night-fall treads thy bare domain! 1842.

[2] 1845.
And, from its perilous shelter driven, . . 1842.

Nor any friendly sound his footsteps led;
Once did the lightning's faint disastrous gleam
Disclose a naked guide-post's double head,
Sight which tho' lost at once a gleam of pleasure shed.

XVI

No swinging sign-board creaked from cottage elm
To stay his steps with faintness overcome;
'Twas dark and void as ocean's watery realm
Roaring with storms beneath night's starless gloom;
No gipsy cower'd o'er fire of furze or broom;
No labourer watched his red kiln glaring bright,
Nor taper glimmered dim from sick man's room;
Along the waste no line of mournful light
From lamp of lonely toll-gate streamed athwart the night.

XVII

At length, though hid in clouds, the moon arose;
The downs were visible—and now revealed
A structure stands, which two bare slopes enclose.
It was a spot, where, ancient vows fulfilled,
Kind pious hands did to the Virgin build
A lonely Spital, the belated swain
From the night terrors of that waste to shield:
But there no human being could remain,
And now the walls are named the "Dead House" of the plain.

XVIII

Though he had little cause to love the abode
Of man, or covet sight of mortal face,
Yet when faint beams of light that ruin showed,
How glad he was at length to find some trace
Of human shelter in that dreary place.
Till to his flock the early shepherd goes,
Here shall much-needed sleep his frame embrace.
In a dry nook where fern the floor bestrows
He lays his stiffened limbs,—his eyes begin to close;

XIX

When hearing a deep sigh, that seemed to come
From one who mourned in sleep, he raised his head,
And saw a woman in the naked room
Outstretched, and turning on a restless bed:
The moon a wan dead light around her shed.
He waked her—spake in tone that would not fail,
He hoped, to calm her mind; but ill he sped,
For of that ruin she had heard a tale
Which now with freezing thoughts did all her powers assail;

XX

Had heard of one who, forced from storms to shroud,
Felt the loose walls of this decayed Retreat
Rock to incessant neighings shrill and loud,
While his horse pawed the floor with furious heat;
Till on a stone, that sparkled to his feet,
Struck, and still struck again, the troubled horse:
The man half raised the stone with pain and sweat,
Half raised, for well his arm might lose its force
Disclosing the grim head of a late murdered corse.

XXI

Such tale of this lone mansion she had learned,
And, when that shape, with eyes in sleep half drowned,
By the moon's sullen lamp she first discerned,
Cold stony horror all her senses bound.
Her he addressed in words of cheering sound;
Recovering heart, like answer did she make;
And well it was that, of the corse there found,
In converse that ensued she nothing spake;
She knew not what dire pangs in him such tale could wake.

XXII

But soon his voice and words of kind intent
Banished that dismal thought; and now the wind
In fainter howlings told its *rage* was spent:
Meanwhile discourse ensued of various kind,

Which by degrees a confidence of mind
And mutual interest failed not to create.
And, to a natural sympathy resigned,
In that forsaken building where they sate
The Woman thus retraced her own untoward fate.
[1]

XXIII

"By Derwent's side my father dwelt—a man
Of virtuous life, by pious parents bred;[2]
And I believe that, soon as I began
To lisp, he made me kneel beside my bed,
And in his hearing there my prayers I said:
And afterwards, by my good father taught,
I read, and loved the books in which I read;
For books in every neighbouring house I sought,
And nothing to my mind a sweeter pleasure brought.

XXIV[3]

"A little croft we owned—a plot of corn,
A garden stored with peas, and mint, and thyme,
And flowers for posies, oft on Sunday morn
Plucked while the church bells rang their earliest chime.

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[1] The following stanza was only in the editions of 1798 and 1800:

By Derwent's side my Father's cottage stood,
(The Woman thus her artless story told)
One field, a flock, and what the neighbouring flood
Supplied, to him were more than mines of gold.
Light was my sleep; my days in transport roll'd:
With thoughtless joy I stretch'd along the shore
My father's nets, or watched, when from the fold
High o'er the cliffs I led my fleecy store,
A dizzy depth below! his boat and twinkling oar. 1798.

. . . or from the mountain fold
Saw on the distant lake his twinkling oar
Or watch'd his lazy boat still less'ning more and more.
1800.

[2] 1842.

My father was a good and pious man,
An honest man by honest parents bred, 1798.

[3] Stanzas XXIV. and XXV. were omitted from the editions of 1802 and 1805. They were restored in 1820.

Can I forget our freaks at shearing time!
My hen's rich nest through long grass scarce espied;
The cowslip-gathering in June's dewy prime;
The swans that with white chests upreared in pride
Rushing and racing came to meet me at the water-side![1]

XXV

"The staff I well[2] remember which upbore
The bending body of my active sire;
His seat beneath the honied sycamore
Where[3] the bees hummed, and chair by winter fire;
When market-morning came, the neat attire
With which, though bent on haste, myself I decked;
Our watchful house-dog, that would tease and tire
The stranger till its barking-fit I checked;[4]
The red-breast, known for years, which at my casement
pecked.

XXVI

"The suns of twenty summers danced along,—
Too little marked how fast they rolled away:

---

[1] 1842.
Can I forget what charms did once adorn
My garden, stored with pease, and mint, and thyme,
And rose and lilly for the sabbath morn?
The sabbath bells, and their delightful chime;
The gambols and wild freaks at shearing time;
My hen's rich nest through long grass scarce espied;
The cowslip-gathering at May's dewy prime;
The swans, that, when I sought the water-side,
From far to meet me came, spreading their snowy pride.
1798.
Can I forget our croft and plot of corn;
Our garden, stored . . . . . . 1836.
The cowslip-gathering in June's dewy prime; 1820.
The swans, that with white chests upheaved in pride,
Rushing and racing came to meet me at the waterside.
1836.

[2] 1842.
. . . yet . . . . . . 1798.

[3] 1802.
When . . . . 1798.

[4] 1836.
My watchful dog, whose starts of furious ire,
When stranger passed, so often I have check'd; 1798.

But, through severe mischance and cruel wrong,
My father's substance fell into decay:
We toiled and struggled, hoping for a day
When Fortune might[1] put on a kinder look;
But vain were wishes, efforts vain as they;
He from his old hereditary nook
Must part; the summons[2] came;—our final leave we took.[3]

[4]

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[1] 1845.
. . . . would . . . . 1842.

[2] 1845.
. . . . summer . . . . 1842.

[3] 1845.
The suns of twenty summers danced along,—
Ah! little marked, how fast they rolled away:
Then rose a mansion proud our woods among,
And cottage after cottage owned its sway,
No joy to see a neighbouring house, or stray
Through pastures not his own, the master took;
My Father dared his greedy wish gainsay;
He loved his old hereditary nook,
And ill could I the thought of such sad parting brook.
1798.

Then rose a stately hall our woods among, 1800.

. . . . how fast they rolled away:
But, through severe mischance, and cruel wrong,
My father's substance fell into decay;
We toiled, and struggled—hoping for a day
When Fortune should put on a kinder look;
But vain were wishes—efforts vain as they:
He from his old hereditary nook
Must part,—the summons came,—our final leave we took.
1820.

[4] The following stanza occurs only in the editions 1798 to 1805:
But, when he had refused the proffered gold,
To cruel injuries he became a prey,
Sore traversed in whate'er he bought and sold:
His troubles grew upon him day by day,
Till all his substance fell into decay.
His little range of water was denied; *

---

* Several of the Lakes in the north of England are let out to different Fishermen, in parcels marked out by imaginary lines drawn from rock to rock.—W. W. 1798.

XXVII

"It was indeed a miserable hour[1]
When, from the last hill-top, my sire surveyed,
Peering above the trees, the steeple tower
That on his marriage day sweet music made!
Till then, he hoped his bones might there be laid
Close by my mother in their native bowers:
Bidding me trust in God, he stood and prayed;—
I could not pray:—through tears that fell in showers
Glimmered our dear-loved home, alas! no longer ours![2]

XXVIII

"There was a Youth whom I had loved so long,
That when I loved him not I cannot say:
'Mid the green mountains many a thoughtless sóng[3]
We two had sung, like gladsome birds[4] in May;
When we began to tire of childish play,
We seemed still more and more to prize each other;
We talked of marriage and our marriage day;
And I in truth did love him like a brother,
For never could I hope to meet with such another.

All but the bed where his old body lay,
All, all was seized, and weeping, side by side,
We sought a home where we uninjured might abide.
1798.

And all his substance fell into decay.
They dealt most hardly with him, and he tried
To move their hearts—but it was vain—for they
Seized all he had; and, weeping . . 1802-5.

[1] 1820.
Can I forget that miserable hour, 1798.
It was in truth a lamentable hour 1802.

[2] 1798.
I saw our own dear home, that was . . 1802.
The edition of 1820 returns to the text of 1798.

[3] 1827.
. . . . . many and many a song 1798.

[4] 1800.
. . . . . little birds . . 1798.

XXIX

"Two years were passed since to a distant town
He had repaired to ply a gainful trade:[1]
What tears of bitter grief, till then unknown!
What tender vows our last sad kiss delayed!
To him we turned:—we had no other aid:
Like one revived, upon his neck I wept;
And her whom he had loved in joy, he said,
He well could love in grief; his faith he kept;
And in a quiet home once more my father slept.

XXX

"We lived in peace and comfort; and were blest
With daily bread, by constant toil supplied.[2]
Three lovely babes had lain upon my breast;[3]
And often, viewing their sweet smiles, I sighed,
And knew not why. My happy father died,
When threatened war[4] reduced the children's meal:
Thrice happy! that for him the grave could hide[5]
The empty loom, cold hearth, and silent wheel,
And tears that[6] flowed for ills which patience might[7] not heal.

---

[1] 1836.
His father said, that to a distant town
He must repair, to ply the artist's trade. 1798.
Two years were pass'd, since to a distant Town
He had repair'd to ply the artist's trade. 1802.

[2] 1802.
Four years each day with daily bread was blest,
By constant toil and constant prayer supplied. 1798.

[3] 1836.
Three lovely infants lay upon my breast; 1798.

[4] 1842.
When sad distress . . . . . . 1798.

[5] 1836.
. . . . from him the grave did hide 1798.
. . . . for him . . . . . 1820.

[6] 1798.
. . . which . . . Only in 1820.

[7] 1836.
. . . . . could . . 1798.

XXXI

"'Twas a hard change; an evil time was come;
We had no hope, and no relief could gain:
But soon, with proud parade,[1] the noisy drum
Beat round to clear[2] the streets of want and pain.
My husband's arms now only served to strain
Me and his children hungering in his view;
In such dismay my prayers and tears were vain:
To join those miserable men he flew,
And now to the sea-coast, with numbers more, we drew.

XXXII

"There were we long neglected, and we bore
Much sorrow ere the fleet its anchor weighed[3]
Green fields before us, and our native shore,
We breathed a pestilential air, that made
Ravage for which no knell was heard. We prayed
For our departure; wished and wished—nor knew,
'Mid that long sickness and those hopes delayed,[4]
That happier days we never more must view.
The parting signal streamed—at last the land withdrew.

---

[1] 1798.
But soon, day after day, ... 1802.
The edition of 1820 reverts to the reading of 1798.

[2] 1836.
. . to sweep . . . . . . 1798.

[3] 1836.
There foul neglect for months and months we bore,
Nor yet the crowded fleet its anchor stirred. 1798.

There, long were we neglected, and we bore
Much sorrow ere the fleet its anchor weigh'd; 1802.

[4] 1802.
Green fields before us and our native shore,
By fever, from polluted air incurred,
Ravage was made, for which no knell was heard.
Fondly we wished, and wished away, nor knew,
'Mid that long sickness, and those hopes deferr'd, 1798.

XXXIII

"But the calm summer season now was past.[1]
On as we drove, the equinoctial deep
Ran mountains high before the howling blast,
And many perished in the whirlwind's sweep.
We gazed with terror on their gloomy sleep,[2]
Untaught that soon such anguish must ensue,
Our hopes such harvest of affliction reap,
That we the mercy of the waves should rue:
We reached the western world, a poor devoted crew.
[3]

XXXIV

"The pains and plagues that on our heads came down,
Disease and famine, agony and fear,
In wood or wilderness, in camp or town,
It would unman the firmest heart to hear.[4]
All perished—all in one remorseless year,
Husband and children! one by one, by sword
And ravenous plague, all perished: every tear
Dried up, despairing, desolate, on board
A British ship I waked, as from a trance restored."

---

[1] 1802.
But from delay the summer calms were past. 1798.

[2] 1802.
We gazed with terror on the gloomy sleep
Of them that perished in the whirlwind's sweep, 1798.

[3]
Oh! dreadful price of being to resign
All that is dear *in* being! better far
In Want's most lonely cave till death to pine,
Unseen, unheard, unwatched by any star;
Or in the streets and walks where proud men are,
Better our dying bodies to obtrude,
Than dog-like, wading at the heels of war,
Protract a curst existence, with the brood
That lap (their very nourishment!) their brother's blood.
Only in the editions of 1798 and 1800.

[4] 1842.
It would thy brain unsettle even to hear. 1798.

XXXV

Here paused she of all present thought forlorn,
Nor voice, nor sound, that moment's pain expressed,
Yet Nature, with excess of grief o'erborne,
From her full eyes their watery load released.
He too was mute: and, ere her weeping ceased,
He rose, and to the ruin's portal went,
And saw the dawn opening the silvery east
With rays of promise, north and southward sent;
And soon with crimson fire kindled the firmament.

XXXVI

"O come," he cried, "come, after weary night
Of such rough storm, this happy change to view."
So forth she came, and eastward looked; the sight
Over her brow like dawn of gladness threw;
Upon her cheek, to which its youthful hue
Seemed to return, dried the last lingering tear,
And from her grateful heart a fresh one drew:
The whilst her comrade to her pensive cheer
Tempered fit words of hope; and the lark warbled near.

XXXVII

They looked and saw a lengthening road, and wain
That rang down a bare slope not far remote:
The barrows glistered bright with drops of rain,
Whistled the waggoner with merry note,
The cock far off sounded his clarion throat;
But town, or farm, or hamlet, none they viewed,
Only were told there stood a lonely cot
A long mile thence. While thither they pursued
Their way, the Woman thus her mournful tale renewed.

XXXVIII

"Peaceful as this immeasurable plain
Is now, by beams of dawning light impress,[1]

[1] 1842.
Peaceful as some immeasurable plain
By the first beams of dawning light impress'd, 1798.

In the calm sunshine slept the glittering main;
The very ocean hath its hour of rest.
I too forgot the heavings of my breast.[1]
How quiet 'round me ship and ocean were!
As quiet all within me. I was blest,
And looked, and fed upon the silent air
Until it seemed to bring a joy to my despair.[2]

XXXIX

"Ah! how unlike those late terrific sleeps,
And groans that rage of racking famine spoke;
The unburied dead that lay in festering heaps,[3]
The breathing pestilence that rose like smoke,
The shriek that from the distant battle broke,
The mine's dire earthquake, and the pallid host
Driven by the bomb's incessant thunder-stroke
To loathsome vaults, where heart-sick anguish tossed,
Hope died, and fear itself in agony was lost!
[4]

---

[1] 1827.
. . . has its hour of rest,
That comes not to the human mourner's breast. 1798.
I too was calm, though heavily distress'd! 1802.

[2] 1842.
Remote from man, and storms of mortal care,
A heavenly silence did the waves invest;
I looked and looked along the silent air,
Until it seemed to bring a joy to my despair. 1798.
Oh me, how quiet sky and ocean were!
My heart was healed within me, I was bless'd,
And looked, and looked . . . . . 1802.
My heart was hushed within me, . . . 1815.
As quiet all within me. . . . . . 1827.

[3] 1800.
Where looks inhuman dwelt on festering heaps! 1798.

[4] The following stanza appeared only in the editions 1798-1805:
Yet does that burst of woe congeal my frame,
When the dark streets appeared to heave and gape,

XL

"Some mighty gulf of separation passed,
I seemed transported to another world;
A thought resigned with pain, when from the mast
The impatient mariner the sail unfurled,
And, whistling, called the wind that hardly curled
The silent sea. From the sweet thoughts of home
And from all hope I was for ever hurled.
For me—farthest from earthly port to roam
Was best, could I but shun the spot where man might
come.

XLI

"And oft I thought (my fancy was so strong)
That I, at last, a resting-place had found;
'Here will I dwell,' said I, 'my whole life long,[1]
Roaming the illimitable waters round;
Here will I live, of all but heaven disowned,

While like a sea the storming army came,
And Fire from Hell reared his gigantic shape,
And Murder, by the ghastly gleam, and Rape
Seized their joint prey, the mother and the child!
But from these crazing thoughts my brain, escape!
—For weeks the balmy air breathed soft and mild,
And on the gliding vessel Heaven and Ocean smiled.
1798.

At midnight once the storming Army came,
Yet do I see the miserable sight,
The Bayonet, the Soldier, and the Flame
That followed us and faced us in our flight:
When Rape and Murder by the ghastly light
Seized their joint prey, the Mother and the Child!
But I must leave these thoughts.—From night to night,
From day to day, the air breathed soft and mild;
And on the gliding vessel Heaven and Ocean smiled.
1802-5.

[1] 1802.
And oft, robb'd of my perfect mind, I thought
At last my feet a resting-place had found:
Here will I weep in peace, (so fancy wrought,) 1798.

And end my days upon the peaceful flood.'—[1]
To break my dream the vessel reached its bound;
And homeless near a thousand homes I stood,
And near a thousand tables pined and wanted food.

XLII

"No help I sought; in sorrow turned adrift,
Was hopeless, as if cast on some bare rock;[2]
Nor morsel to my mouth that day did lift,
Nor raised[3] my hand at any door to knock.
I lay where, with his drowsy mates, the cock
From the cross-timber of an out-house hung:
Dismally[4] tolled, that night, the city clock!
At morn my sick heart hunger scarcely stung,
Nor to the beggar's language could I fit[5] my tongue.

XLIII

"So passed a second day; and, when the third
Was come, I tried in vain the crowd's resort.[6]
—In deep despair, by frightful wishes stirred,
Near the sea-side I reached a ruined fort;
There, pains which nature could no more support,

---

[1] 1842.
Here watch, of every human friend disowned,
All day, my ready tomb the ocean-flood— 1798.
Here will I live:—of every friend disown'd,
Here will I roam about the ocean flood.— 1802.
And end my days upon the ocean flood."— 1815.

[2] 1842.
By grief enfeebled was I turned adrift,
Helpless as sailor cast on desart rock; 1798.
Helpless as sailor cast on some bare rock; 1836.

[3] 1842.
Nor dared . . . . 1798.

[4] 1802.
How dismal . . . . 1798.

[5] 1832.
. . . . . frame . . . 1798.

[6] 1836.
So passed another day, and so the third:
Then did I try, in vain, the crowd's resort, 1798.

With blindness linked, did on my vitals fall;
And, after many interruptions short[1]
Of hideous sense, I sank,[2] nor step could crawl:
Unsought for was the help that did my life recal.[3]

XLIV

"Borne to a hospital, I lay with brain
Drowsy and weak, and shattered memory;[4]
I heard my neighbours in their beds complain
Of many things which never troubled me—
Of feet still bustling round with busy glee,
Of looks where common kindness had no part,
Of service done with cold formality,[5]
Fretting the fever round the languid heart,
And groans which, as they said, might[6] make a dead man start.

XLV

"These things just served to stir the slumbering[7] sense,
Nor pain nor pity in my bosom raised.
With strength did memory return;[8] and, thence
Dismissed, again on open day I gazed,

---

[1] 1827.
Dizzy my brain, with interruption short 1798.
And I had many interruptions short 1802.

[2] 1802.
. . . . . sunk . . . . 1798.

[3] 1827.
And thence was borne away to neighbouring hospital. 1798.
And thence was carried to a neighbouring Hospital. 1802.

[4] 1827.
Recovery came with food: but still, my brain
Was weak, nor of the past had memory. 1798.

[5] 1842.
. . . . . with careless cruelty, 1798.

[6] 1815.
. . . . would . . . . 1798.

[7] 1836.
. . . . . . torpid . . 1798.

[8] 1827.
Memory, though slow, returned with strength; . 1798.
My memory and my strength returned; . . . 1802.

At houses, men, and common light, amazed.
The lanes I sought, and, as the sun retired,
Came where beneath the trees a faggot blazed;
The travellers[1] saw me weep, my fate inquired,
And gave me food—and rest, more welcome, more desired.[2]

XLVI

"Rough potters seemed they, trading soberly
With panniered asses driven from door to door;
But life of happier sort set forth to me,[3]
And other joys my fancy to allure—
The bag-pipe dinning on the midnight moor
In barn uplighted; and companions boon,
Well met from far with revelry secure
Among the forest glades, while jocund June[4]
Rolled fast along the sky his warm and genial moon.

---

[1] 1802.
The wild brood . . . . 1798.

[2] The following stanza occurs only in the editions of 1798 to 1805:
My heart is touched to think that men like these,
The rude earth's tenants, were my first relief:
How kindly did they paint their vagrant ease!
And their long holiday that feared not grief,
For all belonged to all, and each was chief.
No plough their sinews strained; on grating road
No wain they drove, and yet, the yellow sheaf
In every vale for their delight was stowed:
For them, in nature's meads, the milky udder flowed.
1798.
My heart is touched to think that men like these,
Wild houseless Wanderers, were my first relief: 1802.
In every field, with milk their dairy overflow'd. 1802.

[3] 1836.
Semblance, with straw and pannier'd ass, they made
Of potters wandering on from door to door:
But life of happier sort to me pourtrayed, 1798.
They with their pannier'd Asses semblance made
Of Potters . . . . 1802.

[4] 1836.
In depth of forest glade, when . . . 1798.
Among the forest glades when . . . 1802.

XLVII

"But ill they suited me—those journeys dark[1]
O'er moor and mountain, midnight theft to hatch!
To charm the surly house-dog's faithful bark,
Or hang on tip-toe at the lifted latch.
The gloomy lantern, and the dim blue match,
The black disguise, the warning whistle shrill,
And ear still busy on its nightly watch,
Were not for me, brought up in nothing ill:
Besides, on griefs so fresh my thoughts were brooding still.

XLVIII

"What could I do, unaided and unblest?
My[2] father! gone was every friend of thine:
And kindred of dead husband are at best
Small help; and, after marriage such as mine,
With little kindness would to me incline.
Nor was I[3] then for toil or service fit;
My deep-drawn sighs no effort could confine;
In open air forgetful would I sit[4]
Whole hours, with[5] idle arms in moping sorrow knit.

XLIX

"The roads I paced, I loitered through the fields;
Contentedly, yet sometimes self-accused,

---

[1] 1802.
But ill it suited me, in journey dark 1798.

[2] 1802.
Poor father! . . . . 1798.

[3] 1842.
Ill was I . . . . 1798.

[4] 1842.
With tears whose course no effort could confine,
By high-way side forgetful would I sit 1798.
By the road-side forgetful would I sit 1802.
In the open air forgetful . . . . 1836.

[5] 1836.
. . . my . . . . . . 1798.

Trusted my life to what chance bounty yields,[1]
Now coldly given, now utterly refused.
The ground[2] I for my bed have often used:
But what afflicts my peace with keenest ruth,
Is that I have my inner self abused,
Forgone the home delight of constant truth,
And clear and open soul, so prized in fearless youth.

L

"Through tears the rising sun I oft have viewed,
Through tears have seen him towards that world descend[3]
Where my poor heart lost all its fortitude:
Three years a wanderer now my course I bend—[4]
Oh! tell me whither—for no earthly friend
Have I."—She ceased, and weeping turned away:
As if because her tale was at an end,
She wept; because she had no more to say
Of that perpetual weight which on her spirit lay.

LI

True sympathy the Sailor's looks expressed,
His looks—for pondering he was mute the while.
Of social Order's care for wretchedness,
Of Time's sure help to calm and reconcile,

---

[1] *1836.*
I lived upon the mercy of the fields,
And oft of cruelty the sky accused;
On hazard, or what general bounty yields, 1798.
I led a wandering life among the fields;
Contentedly, yet sometimes self-accused,
I liv'd upon what casual bounty yields, 1802.

[2] *1802.*
The fields . . . . 1798.

[3] *1836.*
Three years a wanderer, often have I view'd,
In tears, the sun towards that country tend 1798.
Three years thus wandering, ... 1802.

[4] *1836.*
And now across this moor my steps I bend— 1798.

Joy's second spring and Hope's long-treasured smile,
'Twas not for *him* to speak—a man so tried.
Yet, to relieve her heart, in friendly style
Proverbial words of comfort he applied,
And not in vain, while they went pacing side by side.

LII

Ere long, from heaps of turf, before their sight,
Together smoking in the sun's slant beam,
Rise various wreaths that into one unite
Which high and higher mounts with silver gleam:
Fair spectacle,—but instantly a scream
Thence bursting shrill did all remark prevent;
They paused, and heard a hoarser voice blaspheme,
And female cries. Their course they thither bent,
And met a man who foamed with anger vehement.

LIII

A woman stood with quivering lips and pale,
And, pointing to a little child that lay
Stretched on the ground, began a piteous tale;
How in a simple freak of thoughtless play
He had provoked his father, who straightway,
As if each blow were deadlier than the last,
Struck the poor innocent. Pallid with dismay
The Soldier's Widow heard and stood aghast;
And stern looks on the man her grey-haired Comrade cast.

LIV

His voice with indignation rising high
Such further deed in manhood's name forbade;
The peasant, wild in passion, made reply
With bitter insult and revilings sad;
Asked him in scorn what business there he had;
What kind of plunder he was hunting now;
The gallows would one day of him be glad;—

Though inward anguish damped the Sailor's brow,
Yet calm he seemed as thoughts so poignant would allow.

LV

Softly he stroked the child, who lay outstretched
With face to earth; and, as the boy turned round
His battered head, a groan the Sailor fetched
As if he saw—there and upon that ground—
Strange repetition of the deadly wound
He had himself inflicted. Through his brain
At once the griding iron passage found;*
Deluge of tender thoughts then rushed amain,
Nor could his sunken eyes the starting tear restrain.

LVI

Within himself he said—What hearts have we!
The blessing this a father gives his child!
Yet happy thou, poor boy! compared with me,
Suffering not doing ill—fate far more mild.
The stranger's looks and tears of wrath beguiled
The father, and relenting thoughts awoke;
He kissed his son—so all was reconciled.
Then, with a voice which inward trouble broke
Ere to his lips it came, the Sailor them bespoke.

LVII

"Bad is the world, and hard is the world's law
Even for the man who wears the warmest fleece;
Much need have ye that time more closely draw
The bond of nature, all unkindness cease,
And that among so few there still be peace:
Else can ye hope but with such numerous foes
Your pains shall ever with your years increase?"—
While from his heart the appropriate lesson flows,
A correspondent calm stole gently o'er his woes.

* Compare Milton's "grinding sword," *Paradise Lost*, vi. l. 329.—Ed.

LVIII

Forthwith the pair passed on; and down they look
Into a narrow valley's pleasant scene
Where wreaths of vapour tracked a winding brook,
That babbled on through groves and meadows green;
A low-roofed house peeped out the trees between;
The dripping groves resound with cheerful lays,
And melancholy lowings intervene
Of scattered herds, that in the meadow graze,
Some amid lingering shade, some touched by the sun's rays.

LIX

They saw and heard, and, winding with the road
Down a thick wood, they dropt into the vale;
Comfort by prouder mansions unbestowed
Their wearied frames, she hoped, would soon regale.
Erelong they reached that cottage in the dale:
It was a rustic inn;—the board was spread,
The milk-maid followed with her brimming pail,
And lustily the master carved the bread,
Kindly the housewife pressed, and they in comfort fed.

LX

Their breakfast done, the pair, though loth, must part;
Wanderers whose course no longer now agrees.
She rose and bade farewell! and, while her heart
Struggled with tears nor could its sorrow ease,
She left him there; for, clustering round his knees,
With his oak-staff the cottage children played;
And soon she reached a spot o'erhung with trees
And banks of ragged earth; beneath the shade
Across the pebbly road a little runnel strayed.

LXI

A cart and horse beside the rivulet stood;
Chequering the canvas roof the sunbeams shone.
She saw the carman bend to scoop the flood

As the wain fronted her,—wherein lay one,
A pale-faced Woman, in disease far gone.
The carman wet her lips as well behoved;
Bed under her lean body there was none,
Though even to die near one she most had loved
She could not of herself those wasted limbs have moved.

LXII

The Soldier's Widow learned with honest pain
And homefelt force of sympathy sincere,
Why thus that worn-out wretch must there sustain
The jolting road and morning air severe.
The wain pursued its way; and following near
In pure compassion she her steps retraced
Far as the cottage. "A sad sight is here,"
She cried aloud; and forth ran out in haste
The friends whom she had left but a few minutes past.

LXIII

While to the door with eager speed they ran,
From her bare straw the Woman half upraised
Her bony visage—gaunt and deadly wan;
No pity asking, on the group she gazed
With a dim eye, distracted and amazed;
Then sank upon her straw with feeble moan.
Fervently cried the housewife—"God be praised,
I have a house that I can call my own;
Nor shall she perish there, untended and alone!"

LXIV

So in they bear her to the chimney seat,
And busily, though yet with fear, untie
Her garments, and, to warm her icy feet
And chafe her temples, careful hands apply.
Nature reviving, with a deep-drawn sigh
She strove, and not in vain, her head to rear;
Then said—"I thank you all; if I must die,
The God in heaven my prayers for you will hear;
Till now I did not think my end had been so near.

LXV

"Barred every comfort labour could procure,
Suffering what no endurance could assuage,
I was compelled to seek my father's door,
Though loth to be a burthen on his age.
But sickness stopped me in an early stage
Of my sad journey; and within the wain
They placed me—there to end life's pilgrimage,
Unless beneath your roof I may remain:
For I shall never see my father's door again.

LXVI

"My life, Heaven knows, hath long been burthensome;
But, if I have not meekly suffered, meek
May my end be! Soon will this voice be dumb:
Should child of mine e'er wander hither, speak
Of me, say that the worm is on my cheek.—
Torn from our hut, that stood beside the sea
Near Portland lighthouse in a lonesome creek,
My husband served in sad captivity
On shipboard, bound till peace or death should set him free.

LXVII

"A sailor's wife I knew a widow's cares,
Yet two sweet little ones partook my bed;
Hope cheered my dreams, and to my daily prayers
Our heavenly Father granted each day's bread;
Till one was found by stroke of violence dead,
Whose body near our cottage chanced to lie;
A dire suspicion drove us from our shed;
In vain to find a friendly face we try,
Nor could we live together those poor boys and I;

LXVIII

"For evil tongues made oath how on that day
My husband lurked about the neighbourhood;
Now he had fled, and whither none could say,
And *he* had done the deed in the dark wood—

Near his own home!—but he was mild and good;
Never on earth was gentler creature seen;
He'd not have robbed the raven of its food.
My husband's loving kindness stood between
Me and all worldly harms and wrongs however keen."

LXIX

Alas! the thing she told with labouring breath
The Sailor knew too well. That wickedness
His hand had wrought; and when, in the hour of death,
He saw his Wife's lips move his name to bless
With her last words, unable to suppress
His anguish, with his heart he ceased to strive;
And, weeping loud in this extreme distress,
He cried—"Do pity me! That thou shouldst live
I neither ask nor wish—forgive me, but forgive!"

LXX

To tell the change that Voice within her wrought
Nature by sign or sound made no essay;
A sudden joy surprised expiring thought,
And every mortal pang dissolved away.
Borne gently to a bed, in death she lay;
Yet still while over her the husband bent,
A look was in her face which seemed to say,
"Be blest: by sight of thee from heaven was sent
Peace to my parting soul, the fulness of content."

LXXI

She slept in peace,—his pulses throbbed and stopped,
Breathless he gazed upon her face,—then took
Her hand in his, and raised it, but both dropped,
When on his own he cast a rueful look.
His ears were never silent; sleep forsook
His burning eyelids stretched and stiff as lead;
All night from time to time under him shook
The floor as he lay shuddering on his bed;
And oft he groaned aloud, "O God, that I were dead!"

LXXII

The Soldier's Widow lingered in the cot;
And, when he rose, he thanked her pious care
Through which his Wife, to that kind shelter brought,
Died in his arms; and with those thanks a prayer
He breathed for her, and for that merciful pair.
The corse interred, not one hour he remained
Beneath their roof, but to the open air
A burthen, now with fortitude sustained,
He bore within a breast where dreadful quiet reigned.

LXXIII

Confirmed of purpose, fearlessly prepared
For act and suffering, to the city straight
He journeyed, and forthwith his crime declared:
"And from your doom," he added, "now I wait,
Nor let it linger long, the murderer's fate."
Not ineffectual was that piteous claim:
"O welcome sentence which will end though late,"
He said, "the pangs that to my conscience came
Out of that deed. My trust, Saviour! is in thy name!"

LXXIV

His fate was pitied. Him in iron case
(Reader, forgive the intolerable thought)
They hung not:—no one on *his* form or face
Could gaze, as on a show by idlers sought;
No kindred sufferer, to his death-place brought
By lawless curiosity or chance,
When into storm the evening sky is wrought,
Upon his swinging corse an eye can glance,
And drop, as he once dropped, in miserable trance.

LINES

LEFT UPON A SEAT IN A YEW-TREE, WHICH STANDS NEAR THE LAKE OF ESTHWAITE, ON A DESOLATE PART OF THE SHORE, COMMANDING* A BEAUTIFUL PROSPECT

Composed 1795.—Published 1798

[Composed in part at school at Hawkshead. The tree has disappeared, and the slip of Common on which it stood, that ran parallel to the lake, and lay open to it, has long been enclosed; so that the road has lost much of its attraction. This spot was my favourite walk in the evenings during the latter part of my school-time. The individual whose habits and character are here given, was a gentleman of the neighbourhood, a man of talent and learning, who had been educated at one of our Universities, and returned to pass his time in seclusion on his own estate. He died a bachelor in middle age. Induced by the beauty of the prospect, he built a small summer-house, on the rocks above the peninsula on which the Ferry House† stands. This property afterwards passed into the hands of the late Mr. Curwen. The site was long ago pointed out by Mr. West, in his *Guide*, as the pride of the Lakes, and now goes by the name of "The Station." So much used I to be delighted with the view from it, while a little boy, that some years before the first pleasure house was built, I led thither from Hawkshead a youngster about my own age, an Irish boy, who was a servant to an itinerant conjurer. My notion was to witness the pleasure I expected the boy would receive from the prospect of the islands below and the intermingling water. I was not disappointed; and I hope the fact, insignificant as it may appear to some, may be thought worthy of note by others who may cast their eye over these notes.—I. F.]

From 1815 to 1843 these *Lines* were placed by Wordsworth among his "Poems of Sentiment and Reflection." In 1845, they were classed among "Poems written in Youth."—ED.

* Yet commanding, 1798-1805.
† The Ferry on Windermere.—ED.

Nay, Traveller! rest. This lonely Yew-tree stands
Far from all human dwelling: what if here
No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant herb?
What if the bee love not these barren boughs?[1]
Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling waves,
That break against the shore, shall lull thy mind
By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.
Who he was
That piled these stones and with the mossy sod
First covered, and here taught this aged Tree[2]
With its dark arms to form a circling bower,[3]
I well remember.—He was one who owned
No common soul. In youth by science nursed,
And led by nature into a wild scene
Of lofty hopes, he to the world went forth
A favoured Being, knowing no desire
Which genius did not hallow; 'gainst the taint
Of dissolute tongues, and jealousy, and hate,
And scorn,—against all enemies prepared,
All but neglect. The world, for so it thought,
Owed him no service; wherefore he at once
With indignation turned himself away,[4]

---

[1] 1832.
What if these barren boughs the bee not loves; 1798.

[2] 1836.
First covered o'er, and taught this aged tree, 1798.

[3] 1800.
Now wild, to bend its arms in circling shade, 1798.

[4] 1802.
. . . In youth, by genius nurs'd,
And big with lofty views, he to the world
Went forth, pure in his heart, against the taint
Of dissolute tongues, 'gainst jealousy, and hate,
And scorn, against all enemies prepared,
All but neglect: and so, his spirit damped
At once, with rash disdain he turned away, 1798.
. . . The world, for so it thought,
Owed him no service: he was like a plant
Fair to the sun, the darling of the winds,

And with the food of pride sustained his soul
In solitude.—Stranger! these gloomy boughs
Had charms for him; and here he loved to sit,
His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper:[1]
And on these barren rocks, with fern and heath,
And juniper and thistle, sprinkled o'er,[2]
Fixing his downcast[3] eye, he many an hour
A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here
An emblem of his own unfruitful life:
And, lifting up his head, he then would gaze
On the more distant scene,—how lovely 'tis
Thou seest,—and he would gaze till it became
Far lovelier, and his heart could not sustain
The beauty, still more beauteous! Nor, that time,
When nature had subdued him to herself,[4]
Would he forget those Beings to whose minds
Warm from the labours of benevolence
The world, and human life,[5] appeared a scene
Of kindred loveliness: then he would sigh,

But hung with fruit which no one, that passed by,
Regarded, and, his spirit damped at once,
With indignation did he turn away — 1800.

[1] 1798.
The stone-chat, or the sand-lark, restless Bird
Piping along the margin of the lake; — 1815.
The text of 1820 returned to that of 1798.*

[2] 1820.
And on these barren rocks, with juniper,
And heath, and thistle, thinly sprinkled o'er. — 1798.

[3] 1800.
. . downward† . . . . . 1798.

[4] This line was added by S. T. C. in the edition of 1800.

[5] 1827.
. . and man himself, . . . 1798.

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* The final retention of the reading of 1798 was probably due to a remark of Charles Lamb's, in 1815, in which he objected to the loss of the "admirable line" in the first edition, "a line quite alive," he called it. Future generations may doubt whether the reading of 1798, or that of 1815, is the better. —Ed.

† An emendation by S. T. C.—Ed.

Inly disturbed, to think[1] that others felt
What he must never feel: and so, lost Man!
On visionary views would fancy feed,
Till his eye streamed with tears. In this deep vale
He died,—this seat his only monument.
If Thou be one whose heart the holy forms
Of young imagination have kept pure,
Stranger! henceforth be warned; and know that pride,
Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness; that he who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he has never used; that thought with him
Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
Is ever on himself doth look on one,
The least of Nature's works, one who might move
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful, ever. O be wiser, Thou!
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love;
True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of heart.

The place where this Yew-tree stood may be found without difficulty. It was about three-quarters of a mile from Hawkshead, on the eastern shore of the lake, a little to the left above the present highway, as one goes towards Sawrey. Mr. Bowman, the son of Wordsworth's last teacher at the grammar-school of Hawkshead, told me that it stood about forty yards nearer the village than the yew which is now on the roadside, and is sometimes called "Wordsworth's Yew." In the poet's school-days the road passed right through the unenclosed common, and the tree was a conspicuous object. It was removed, he says, owing to the popular belief that its leaves were poisonous, and might injure the cattle grazing in the common. The present tree is erroneously called "Wordsworth's Yew." Its proximity to the place where the tree of the poem stood has given rise to the local tradition.—ED.

[1] 1836.
With mournful joy, to think . . . 1798.

THE BORDERERS

A TRAGEDY

Composed 1795-6.—Published 1842

Readers already acquainted with my Poems will recognise, in the following composition, some eight or ten lines,* which I have not scrupled to retain in the places where they originally stood. It is proper however to add, that they would not have been used elsewhere, if I had foreseen the time when I might be induced to publish this Tragedy.

February 28, 1842.†

This Dramatic Piece, as noted in its title-page, was composed in 1795-6. It lay nearly from that time till within the last two or three months unregarded among my papers, without being mentioned even to my most intimate friends. Having, however, impressions upon my mind which made me unwilling to destroy the MS., I determined to undertake the responsibility of publishing it during my own life, rather than impose upon my successors the task of deciding its fate. Accordingly it has been revised with some care; but, as it was at first written, and is now published, without any view to its exhibition upon the stage, not the slightest alteration has been made in the conduct of the story, or the composition of the characters; above all, in respect to the two leading Persons of the Drama, I felt no inducement to make any change. The study of human nature suggests this awful truth, that, as in the trials to which life subjects us, sin and crime are apt to start from their very opposite qualities, so there are no limits to the hardening of the heart, and the perversion of the understanding to which they may carry their slaves. During my long residence in France, while the Revolution was rapidly advancing to its extreme of wickedness, I had frequent opportunities of being an eye-witness of this process, and it was while that knowledge was fresh upon my memory, that the Tragedy of *The Borderers* was composed.‡

* He doubtless refers to the lines (Act iii, l. 405) "Action is transitory—a step, a blow," etc., which followed the Dedication of *The White Doe of Rylstone* in the edition of 1836.—ED.

† Note prefixed to the edition of 1842.—ED.

‡ Note appended to the edition of 1842.—ED.

[Of this dramatic work I have little to say in addition to the short printed note which will be found attached to it. It was composed at Racedown, in Dorset, during the latter part of the year 1795, and in the following year. Had it been the work of a later period of life, it would have been different in some respects from what it is now. The plot would have been something more complex, and a greater variety of characters introduced to relieve the mind from the pressure of incidents so mournful. The manners also would have been more attended to. My care was almost exclusively given to the passions and the characters, and the position in which the persons in the drama stood relatively to each other, that the reader (for I had then no thought of the stage) might be moved, and to a degree instructed, by lights penetrating somewhat into the depths of our nature. In this endeavour, I cannot think, upon a very late review, that I have failed. As to the scene and period of action, little more was required for my purpose than the absence of established law and government, so that the agents might be at liberty to act on their own impulses. Nevertheless, I do remember, that having a wish to colour the manners in some degree from local history more than my knowledge enabled me to do, I read Redpath's *History of the Borders*, but found there nothing to my purpose. I once made an observation to Sir W. Scott, in which he concurred, that it was difficult to conceive how so dull a book could be written on such a subject. Much about the same time, but little after, Coleridge was employed in writing his tragedy of *Remorse;* and it happened that soon after, through one of the Mr. Poole's, Mr. Knight, the actor, heard that we had been engaged in writing plays, and upon his suggestion, mine was curtailed, and I believe Coleridge's also, was offered to Mr. Harris, manager of Covent Garden. For myself, I had no hope, nor even a wish (though a successful play would in the then state of my finances have been a most welcome piece of good fortune), that he should accept my performance; so that I incurred no disappointment when the piece was *judiciously* returned as not calculated for the stage. In this judgment I entirely concurred: and had it been otherwise, it was so natural for me to shrink from public notice, that any hope I might have had of success would not have reconciled me altogether to such an exhibition. Mr. C.'s play was, as is well known, brought forward several years after, through the kindness of Mr. Sheridan. In conclusion, I may observe, that while I was composing this play, I wrote a short

essay, illustrative of that constitution and those tendencies of human nature which make the apparently *motiveless* actions of bad men intelligible to careful observers. This was partly done with reference to the character of Oswald, and his persevering endeavour to lead the man he disliked into so heinous a crime; but still more to preserve in my distinct remembrance, what I had observed of transitions in character, and the reflections I had been led to make, during the time I was a witness of the changes through which the French Revolution passed.—I. F.]

The Borderers was first published in the 1842 edition of "Poems, chiefly of Early and Late Years." In 1845, it was placed in the class of "Poems written in Youth."—ED.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MARMADUKE. OSWALD. WALLACE. LACY. LENNOX. } Of the Band of Borderers.	Forester. ELDRED, a Peasant. Peasant, Pilgrims, etc.
HERBERT. WILFRED, Servant to MARMADUKE. Host.	IDONEA. Female Beggar. ELEANOR, Wife to ELDRED.

SCENE—*Borders of England and Scotland*

TIME—*The Reign of Henry III.*

ACT I

SCENE—*Road in a Wood*

WALLACE *and* LACY

LACY

THE Troop will be impatient; let us hie
Back to our post, and strip the Scottish Foray
Of their rich Spoil, ere they recross the Border.
—Pity that our young Chief will have no part
In this good service.

WALLACE

Rather let us grieve
That, in the undertaking which has caused
His absence, he hath sought, whate'er his aim,
Companionship with One of crooked ways,
From whose perverted soul can come no good
To our confiding, open-hearted, Leader.

LACY

True; and, remembering how the Band have proved
That Oswald finds small favour in our sight,
Well may we wonder he has gained such power
Over our much-loved Captain.

WALLACE

I have heard
Of some dark deed to which in early life
His passion drove him—then a Voyager
Upon the midland Sea. You knew his bearing
In Palestine?

LACY

Where he despised alike
Mohammedan and Christian. But enough;
Let us begone—the Band may else be foiled.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter MARMADUKE *and* WILFRED

WILFRED

Be cautious, my dear Master!

MARMADUKE

I perceive
That fear is like a cloak which old men huddle
About their love, as if to keep it warm.

WILFRED

Nay, but I grieve that we should part. This Stranger,
For such he is——

MARMADUKE

Your busy fancies, Wilfred,
Might tempt me to a smile; but what of him?

WILFRED

You know that you have saved his life.

MARMADUKE

I know it.

WILFRED

And that he hates you!—Pardon me, perhaps
That word was hasty.

MARMADUKE

Fy! no more of it.

WILFRED

Dear Master! gratitude's a heavy burden
To a proud Soul.—Nobody loves this Oswald—
Yourself, you do not love him.

MARMADUKE

I do more,
I honour him. Strong feelings to his heart
Are natural; and from no one can be learnt
More of man's thoughts and ways than his experience
Has given him power to teach: and then for courage
And enterprise—what perils hath he shunned?
What obstacles hath he failed to overcome?
Answer these questions, from our common knowledge,
And be at rest.

WILFRED

Oh, Sir!

MARMADUKE

Peace, my good Wilfred;
Repair to Liddesdale, and tell the Band
I shall be with them in two days, at farthest.

WILFRED

May He whose eye is over all protect you! [*Exit.*

Enter OSWALD (*a bunch of plants in his hand*)

OSWALD

This wood is rich in plants and curious simples.

MARMADUKE (*looking at them*)

The wild rose, and the poppy, and the nightshade:
Which is your favorite, Oswald?

OSWALD

That which, while it is
Strong to destroy, is also strong to heal—
[*Looking forward.*
Not yet in sight!—We'll saunter here awhile;
They cannot mount the hill, by us unseen.

MARMADUKE (*a letter in his hand*)

It is no common thing when one like you
Performs these delicate services, and therefore
I feel myself much bounden to you, Oswald;
'Tis a strange letter this!—You saw her write it?

OSWALD

And saw the tears with which she blotted it.

MARMADUKE

And nothing less would satisfy him?

OSWALD

No less;
For that another in his Child's affection
Should hold a place, as if 'twere robbery,
He seemed to quarrel with the very thought.
Besides, I know not what strange prejudice
Is rooted in his mind; this Band of ours,
Which you've collected for the noblest ends,

Along the confines of the Esk and Tweed
To guard the Innocent—he calls us "Outlaws";
And, for yourself, in plain terms he asserts
This garb was taken up that indolence
Might want no cover, and rapacity
Be better fed.

MARMADUKE

Ne'er may I own the heart
That cannot feel for one, helpless as he is.

OSWALD

Thou know'st me for a Man not easily moved,
Yet was I grievously provoked to think
Of what I witnessed.

MARMADUKE

This day will suffice
To end her wrongs.

OSWALD

But if the blind Man's tale
Should *yet* be true?

MARMADUKE

Would it were possible!
Did not the Soldier tell thee that himself,
And others who survived the wreck, beheld
The Baron Herbert perish in the waves
Upon the coast of Cyprus?

OSWALD

Yes, even so,
And I had heard the like before: in sooth
The tale of this his quondam Barony
Is cunningly devised; and, on the back
Of his forlorn appearance, could not fail
To make the proud and vain his tributaries,
And stir the pulse of lazy charity.
The seignories of Herbert are in Devon;

We, neighbours of the Esk and Tweed; 'tis much
The Arch-Impostor——

MARMADUKE

Treat him gently, Oswald:
Though I have never seen his face, methinks,
There cannot come a day when I shall cease
To love him. I remember, when a Boy
Of scarcely seven years' growth, beneath the Elm
That casts its shade over our village school,
'Twas my delight to sit and hear Idonea
Repeat her Father's terrible adventures,
Till all the band of play-mates wept together;
And that was the beginning of my love.
And, through all converse of our later years,
An image of this old Man still was present,
When I had been most happy. Pardon me
If this be idly spoken.

OSWALD

See, they come,
Two Travellers!

MARMADUKE (*points*)

The woman [1] is Idonea.

OSWALD

And leading Herbert.

MARMADUKE

We must let them pass—
This thicket will conceal us. [*They step aside.*

Enter IDONEA, *leading* HERBERT *blind*

IDONEA

Dear Father, you sigh deeply; ever since
We left the willow shade by the brook-side,
Your natural breathing has been troubled.

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[1] 1845.
. . . female . . . . 1842.

HERBERT

Nay,
You are too fearful; yet must I confess,
Our march of yesterday had better suited
A firmer step than mine.

IDONEA

That dismal Moor—
In spite of all the larks that cheered our path,
I never can forgive it: but how steadily
You paced along, when the bewildering moonlight
Mocked me with many a strange fantastic shape!—
I thought the Convent never would appear;
It seemed to move away from us: and yet,
That you are thus the fault is mine; for the air
Was soft and warm, no dew lay on the grass,
And midway on the waste ere night had fallen
I spied a Covert walled and roofed with sods—
A miniature; belike some Shepherd-boy,
Who might have found a nothing-doing hour
Heavier than work, raised it: within that hut
We might have made a kindly bed of heath,
And thankfully there rested side by side
Wrapped in our cloaks, and, with recruited strength,
Have hailed the morning sun. But cheerily, Father,—
That staff of yours, I could almost have heart
To fling't away from you: you make no use
Of me, or of my strength;—come, let me feel
That you do press upon me. There—indeed
You are quite exhausted. Let us rest awhile
On this green bank. [*He sits down.*

HERBERT (*after some time*)

Idonea, you are silent,
And I divine the cause.

IDONEA

Do not reproach me:

I pondered patiently your wish and will
When I gave way to your request; and now,
When I behold the ruins of that face,
Those eyeballs dark—dark beyond hope of light,
And think that they were blasted for my sake,
The name of Marmaduke is blown away:
Father, I would not change that sacred feeling
For all this world can give.

HERBERT

Nay, be composed:
Few minutes gone a faintness overspread
My frame, and I bethought me of two things
I ne'er had heart to separate—my grave,
And thee, my Child!

IDONEA

Believe me, honoured Sire!
'Tis weariness that breeds these gloomy fancies,
And you mistake the cause: you hear the woods
Resound with music, could you see the sun,
And look upon the pleasant face of Nature——

HERBERT

I comprehend thee—I should be as cheerful
As if we two were twins; two songsters bred
In the same nest, my spring-time one with thine.
My fancies, fancies if they be, are such
As come, dear Child! from a far deeper source
Than bodily weariness. While here we sit
I feel my strength returning.—The bequest
Of thy kind Patroness, which to receive
We have thus far adventured, will suffice
To save thee from the extreme of penury;
But when thy Father must lie down and die,
How wilt thou stand alone?

IDONEA

Is he not strong?
Is he not valiant?

HERBERT

Am I then so soon
Forgotten? have my warnings passed so quickly
Out of thy mind? My dear, my only, Child;
Thou wouldst be leaning on a broken reed—
This Marmaduke——

IDONEA

O could you hear his voice:
Alas! you do not know him. He is one
(I wot not what ill tongue has wronged him with you)
All gentleness and love. His face bespeaks
A deep and simple meekness: and that Soul,
Which with the motion of a virtuous act
Flashes a look of terror upon guilt,
Is, after conflict, quiet as the ocean,
By a miraculous finger, stilled at once.

HERBERT

Unhappy Woman!

IDONEA

Nay, it was my duty
Thus much to speak; but think not I forget—
Dear Father! how *could* I forget and live—
You and the story of that doleful night
When, Antioch blazing to her topmost towers,
You rushed into the murderous flames, returned
Blind as the grave, but, as you oft have told me,
Clasping your infant Daughter to your heart.

HERBERT

Thy Mother too!—scarce had I gained the door,
I caught her voice; she threw herself upon me,
I felt thy infant brother in her arms;

She saw my blasted face—a tide of soldiers
That instant rushed between us, and I heard
Her last death-shriek, distinct among a thousand.

IDONEA

Nay, Father, stop not; let me hear it all.

HERBERT

Dear Daughter! precious relic of that time—
For my old age, it doth remain with thee
To make it what thou wilt. Thou hast been told,
That when, on our return from Palestine,
I found how my domains had been usurped,
I took thee in my arms, and we began
Our wanderings together. Providence
At length conducted us to Rossland,—there,
Our melancholy story moved a Stranger
To take thee to her home—and for myself,
Soon after, the good Abbot of St. Cuthbert's
Supplied my helplessness with food and raiment,
And, as thou know'st, gave me that humble Cot
Where now we dwell.—For many years I bore
Thy absence, till old age and fresh infirmities
Exacted thy return, and our reunion.
I did not think that, during that long absence,
My Child, forgetful of the name of Herbert,
Had given her love to a wild Freebooter,
Who here, upon the borders of the Tweed,
Doth prey alike on two distracted Countries,
Traitor to both.

IDONEA

Oh, could you hear his voice!
I will not call on Heaven to vouch for me,
But let this kiss speak what is in my heart.

Enter a Peasant

PEASANT

Good morrow, Strangers! If you want a Guide,
Let me have leave to serve you!

IDONEA

My Companion
Hath need of rest; the sight of Hut or Hostel
Would be most welcome.

PEASANT

Yon white hawthorn gained,
You will look down into a dell, and there
Will see an ash from which a sign-board hangs;
The house is hidden by the shade. Old Man,
You seem worn out with travel—shall I support you?

HERBERT

I thank you; but, a resting-place so near,
'Twere wrong to trouble you.

PEASANT

God speed you both.
[*Exit* Peasant.

HERBERT

Idonea, we must part. Be not alarmed—
'Tis but for a few days—a thought has struck me.

IDONEA

That I should leave you at this house, and thence
Proceed alone. It shall be so; for strength
Would fail you ere our journey's end be reached.
[*Exit* HERBERT *supported by* IDONEA.

Re-enter MARMADUKE *and* OSWALD

MARMADUKE

This instant will we stop him——

OSWALD

Be not hasty,
For, sometimes, in despite of my conviction,
He tempted me to think the Story true;
'Tis plain he loves the Maid, and what he said
That savoured of aversion to thy name
Appeared the genuine colour of his soul—
Anxiety lest mischief should befal her
After his death.

MARMADUKE

I have been much deceived.

OSWALD

But sure he loves the Maiden, and never love
Could find delight to nurse itself so strangely,
Thus to torment her with *inventions!*—death—
There must be truth in this.

MARMADUKE

Truth in his story!
He must have felt it then, known what it was,
And in such wise to rack her gentle heart
Had been a tenfold cruelty.

OSWALD

Strange pleasures
Do we poor mortals cater for ourselves!
To see him thus provoke her tenderness
With tales of weakness and infirmity!
I'd wager on his life for twenty years.

MARMADUKE

We will not waste an hour in such a cause.

OSWALD

Why, this is noble! shake her off at once.

MARMADUKE

Her virtues are his instruments.—A Man
Who has so practised on the world's cold sense,
May well deceive his Child—what! leave her thus,
A prey to a deceiver?—no—no—no—
'Tis but a word and then——

OSWALD

Something is here
More than we see, or whence this strong aversion?
Marmaduke! I suspect unworthy tales
Have reached his ear—you have had enemies.

MARMADUKE

Enemies!—of his own coinage.

OSWALD

That may be,
But wherefore slight protection such as you
Have power to yield? perhaps he looks elsewhere.—
I am perplexed.

MARMADUKE

What hast thou heard or seen?

OSWALD

No—no—the thing stands clear of mystery;
(As you have said) he coins himself the slander
With which he taints her ear;—for a plain reason;
He dreads the presence of a virtuous man
Like you; he knows your eye would search his heart,
Your justice stamp upon his evil deeds
The punishment they merit. All is plain:
It cannot be——

MARMADUKE

What cannot be?

OSWALD

Yet that a Father
Should in his love admit no rivalship,
And torture thus the heart of his own Child——

MARMADUKE

Nay, you abuse my friendship!

OSWALD

Heaven forbid!—
There was a circumstance, trifling indeed—
It struck me at the time—yet I believe
I never should have thought of it again
But for the scene which we by chance have witnessed.

MARMADUKE

What is your meaning?

OSWALD

Two days gone I saw,
Though at a distance and he was disguised,
Hovering round Herbert's door, a man whose figure
Resembled much that cold voluptuary,
The villain, Clifford. He hates you, and he knows
Where he can stab you deepest.

MARMADUKE

Clifford never
Would stoop to skulk about a Cottage door—
It could not be.

OSWALD

And yet I now remember,
That, when your praise was warm upon my tongue,
And the blind Man was told how you had rescued
A maiden from the ruffian violence
Of this same Clifford, he became impatient
And would not hear me.

MARMADUKE

No—it cannot be—
I dare not trust myself with such a thought—
Yet whence this strange aversion? You are a man
Not used to rash conjectures——

OSWALD

If you deem it
A thing worth further notice, we must act
With caution, sift the matter artfully.
[*Exeunt* MARMADUKE *and* OSWALD.

SCENE—*The door of the Hostel*

HERBERT, IDONEA, *and* Host

HERBERT (*seated*)

As I am dear to you, remember, Child!
This last request.

IDONEA

You know me, Sire; farewell!

HERBERT

And are you going then? Come, come, Idonea,
We must not part,—I have measured many a league
When these old limbs had need of rest,—and now
I will not play the sluggard.

IDONEA

Nay, sit down.
[*Turning to* Host.
Good Host, such tendance as you would expect
From your own Children, if yourself were sick,
Let this old Man find at your hands; poor Leader,
[*Looking at the dog.*
We soon shall meet again. If thou neglect
This charge of thine, then ill befall thee!—Look,

The little fool is loth to stay behind.
Sir Host! by all the love you bear to courtesy,
Take care of him, and feed the truant well.

HOST

Fear not, I will obey you;—but One so young,
And One so fair, it goes against my heart
That you should travel unattended, Lady!—
I have a palfrey and a groom: the lad
Shall squire you, (would it not be better, Sir?)
And for less fee than I would let him run
For any lady I have seen this twelvemonth.

IDONEA

You know, Sir, I have been too long your guard
Not to have learnt to laugh at little fears.
Why, if a wolf should leap from out a thicket,
A look of mine would send him scouring back,
Unless I differ from the thing I am
When you are by my side.

HERBERT

Idonea, wolves
Are not the enemies that move my fears.

IDONEA

No more, I pray, of this. Three days at farthest
Will bring me back—protect him, Saints—farewell!
[*Exit* IDONEA.

HOST

'Tis never drought with us—St. Cuthbert and his Pilgrims,
Thanks to them, are to us a stream of comfort:
Pity the Maiden did not wait awhile;
She could not, Sir, have failed of company.

HERBERT

Now she is gone, I fain would call her back.

HOST (*calling*)

Holla!

HERBERT

No, no, the business must be done.—
What means this riotous noise?

HOST

The villagers
Are flocking in—a wedding festival—
That's all—God save you, Sir.

Enter OSWALD

OSWALD

Ha! as I live,
The Baron Herbert.

HOST

Mercy, the Baron Herbert!

OSWALD

So far into your journey! on my life,
You are a lusty Traveller. But how fare you?

HERBERT

Well as the wreck I am permits. And you, Sir?

OSWALD

I do not see Idonea.

HERBERT

Dutiful Girl,
She is gone before, to spare my weariness.
But what has brought you hither?

OSWALD

A slight affair,
That will be soon despatched.

HERBERT

Did Marmaduke
Receive that letter?

OSWALD

Be at peace.—The tie
Is broken, you will hear no more of *him*.

HERBERT

This is true comfort, thanks a thousand times!—
That noise!—would I had gone with her as far
As the Lord Clifford's Castle: I have heard
That, in his milder moods, he has expressed
Compassion for me. His influence is great
With Henry, our good King;—the Baron might
Have heard my suit, and urged my plea at Court.
No matter—he's a dangerous Man.—That noise!—
'Tis too disorderly for sleep or rest.
Idonea would have fears for me,—the Convent
Will give me quiet lodging. You have a boy, good Host,
And he must lead me back.

OSWALD

You are most lucky;
I have been waiting in the wood hard by
For a companion—here he comes; our journey

Enter MARMADUKE

Lies on your way; accept us as your Guides.

HERBERT

Alas! I creep so slowly.

OSWALD

Never fear;
We'll not complain of that.

HERBERT

My limbs are stiff
And need repose. Could you but wait an hour?

OSWALD

Most willingly!—Come, let me lead you in,
And, while you take your rest, think not of us;
We'll stroll into the wood; lean on my arm.

[*Conducts* HERBERT *into the house. Exit* MARMADUKE.

Enter Villagers

OSWALD (*to himself, coming out of the Hostel*)

I have prepared a most apt Instrument—
The Vagrant must, no doubt, be loitering somewhere
About this ground; she hath a tongue well skilled,
By mingling natural matter of her own
With all the daring fictions I have taught her,
To win belief, such as my plot requires.

[*Exit* OSWALD.

Enter more Villagers, *a* Musician *among them*

HOST (*to them*)

Into the court, my Friend, and perch yourself
Aloft upon the elm-tree. Pretty Maids,
Garlands and flowers, and cakes and merry thoughts,
Are here, to send the sun into the west
More speedily than you belike would wish.

SCENE *changes to the Wood adjoining the Hostel*—
MARMADUKE *and* OSWALD *entering*

MARMADUKE

I would fain hope that we deceive ourselves:
When first I saw him sitting there, alone,
It struck upon my heart I know not how.

OSWALD

To-day will clear up all.—You marked a Cottage,
That ragged Dwelling, close beneath a rock

By the brook-side: it is the abode of One,
A Maiden innocent till ensnared by Clifford,
Who soon grew weary of her; but, alas!
What she had seen and suffered turned her brain.
Cast off by her Betrayer, she dwells alone,
Nor moves her hands to any needful work:
She eats her food which every day the peasants
Bring to her hut; and so the Wretch has lived
Ten years; and no one ever heard her voice;
But every night at the first stroke of twelve
She quits her house, and, in the neighbouring Churchyard
Upon the self-same spot, in rain or storm,
She paces out the hour 'twixt twelve and one—
She paces round and round an Infant's grave,
And in the Churchyard sod her feet have worn
A hollow ring; they say it is knee-deep—
Ah![1] what is here?

A female Beggar *rises up, rubbing her eyes as if in sleep—*
a Child in her arms

BEGGAR

O Gentlemen, I thank you;
I've had the saddest dream that ever troubled
The heart of living creature.—My poor Babe
Was crying, as I thought, crying for bread
When I had none to give him; whereupon,
I put a slip of foxglove in his hand,
Which pleased him so, that he was hushed at once:
When, into one of those same spotted bells
A bee came darting, which the Child with joy
Imprisoned there, and held it to his ear,
And suddenly grew black, as he would die.

MARMADUKE

We have no time for this, my babbling Gossip;
Here's what will comfort you. [*Gives her money.*

[1] 1845.
Ha! . . . . 1842.

BEGGAR

The Saints reward you
For this good deed!—Well, Sirs, this passed away;
And afterwards I fancied, a strange dog,
Trotting alone along the beaten road,
Came to my child as by my side he slept
And, fondling, licked his face, then on a sudden
Snapped fierce to make a morsel of his head:
But here he is, [*kissing the Child*] it must have been a dream.

OSWALD

When next inclined to sleep, take my advice,
And put your head, good Woman, under cover.

BEGGAR

Oh, Sir, you would not talk thus, if you knew
What life is this of ours, how sleep will master
The weary-worn.—You gentlefolk have got
Warm chambers to your wish. I'd rather be
A stone than what I am.—But two nights gone,
The darkness overtook me—wind and rain
Beat hard upon my head—and yet I saw
A glow-worm, through the covert of the furze,
Shine calmly as if nothing ailed the sky:
At which I half accused the God in Heaven.—
You must forgive me.

OSWALD

Ay, and if you think
The Fairies are to blame, and you should chide
Your favourite saint—no matter—this good day
Has made amends.

BEGGAR

Thanks to you both; but, Oh Sir!
How would you like to travel on whole hours
As I have done, my eyes upon the ground,
Expecting still, I knew not how, to find
A piece of money glittering through the dust.

MARMADUKE

This woman is a prater. Pray, good Lady!
Do you tell fortunes?

BEGGAR

Oh Sir, you are like the rest.
This Little-one—it cuts me to the heart—
Well! they might turn a beggar from their doors,
But there are Mothers who can see the Babe
Here at my breast, and ask me where I bought it:
This they can do, and look upon my face—
But you, Sir, should be kinder.

MARMADUKE

Come hither, Fathers,
And learn what nature is from this poor Wretch!

BEGGAR

Ay, Sir, there's nobody that feels for us.
Why now—but yesterday I overtook
A blind old Greybeard and accosted him,
I' th' name of all the Saints, and by the Mass
He should have used me better!—Charity!
If you can melt a rock, he is your man;
But I'll be even with him—here again
Have I been waiting for him.

OSWALD

Well, but softly,
Who is it that hath wronged you?

BEGGAR

Mark you me;
I'll point him out;—a Maiden is his guide,
Lovely as Spring's first rose; a little dog,
Tied by a woollen cord, moves on before
With look as sad as he were dumb; the cur,
I owe him no ill will, but in good sooth
He does his Master credit.

MARMADUKE

As I live,
'Tis Herbert and no other!

BEGGAR

'Tis a feast to see him,
Lank as a ghost and tall, his shoulders bent,
And long beard white with age—yet evermore,
As if he were the only Saint on earth,
He turns his face to heaven.

OSWALD

But why so violent
Against this venerable Man?

BEGGAR

I'll tell you:
He has the very hardest heart on earth;
I had as lief turn to the Friar's school
And knock for entrance, in mid holiday.

MARMADUKE

But to your story.

BEGGAR

I was saying, Sir—
Well!—he has often spurned me like a toad,
But yesterday was worse than all;—at last
I overtook him, Sirs, my Babe and I,
And begged a little aid for charity:
But he was snappish as a cottage cur.
Well then, says I—I'll out with it; at which
I cast a look upon the Girl, and felt
As if my heart would burst; and so I left him.

OSWALD

I think, good Woman, you are the very person
Whom, but some few days past, I saw in Eskdale,
At Herbert's door.

BEGGAR

Ay; and if truth were known
I have good business there.

OSWALD

I met you at the threshold,
And he seemed angry.

BEGGAR

Angry! well he might;
And long as I can stir I'll dog him.—Yesterday,
To serve me so, and knowing that he owes
The best of all he has to me and mine.
But 'tis all over now.—That good old Lady
Has left a power of riches; and I say it,
If there's a lawyer in the land, the knave
Shall give me half.

OSWALD

What's this?—I fear, good Woman,
You have been insolent.

BEGGAR

And there's the Baron,
I spied him skulking in his peasant's dress.

OSWALD

How say you? in disguise?—

MARMADUKE

But what's your business
With Herbert or his Daughter?

BEGGAR

Daughter! truly—
But how's the day?—I fear, my little Boy,
We've overslept ourselves.—Sirs, have you seen him?
[*Offers to go.*

MARMADUKE

I must have more of this ;—you shall not stir
An inch, till I am answered. Know you aught
That doth concern this Herbert?

BEGGAR

You are provoked,
And will misuse me, Sir!

MARMADUKE

No trifling, Woman!—

OSWALD

You are as safe as in a sanctuary;
Speak.

MARMADUKE

Speak!

BEGGAR

He is a most hard-hearted Man.

MARMADUKE

Your life is at my mercy.

BEGGAR

Do not harm me,
And I will tell you all!—You know not, Sir,
What strong temptations press upon the Poor.

OSWALD

Speak out.

BEGGAR

O Sir, I've been a wicked Woman.

OSWALD

Nay, but speak out!

BEGGAR

He flattered me, and said
What harvest it would bring us both; and so,
I parted with the Child.

MARMADUKE

Parted with whom?[1]

BEGGAR

Idonea, as he calls her; but the Girl
Is mine.

MARMADUKE

Yours, Woman! are you Herbert's wife?

BEGGAR

Wife, Sir! his wife—not I; my husband, Sir,
Was of Kirkoswald—many a snowy winter
We've weathered out together. My poor Gilfred!
He has been two years in his grave.

MARMADUKE

Enough.

OSWALD

We've solved the riddle—Miscreant!

MARMADUKE

Do you,
Good Dame, repair to Liddesdale and wait
For my return; be sure you shall have justice.

OSWALD

A lucky woman!—go, you have done good service.
[*Aside.*

MARMADUKE (*to himself*)

Eternal praises on the power that saved her!—

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[1] 1849.
With whom you parted? 1842.

OSWALD (*gives her money*)

Here's for your little boy—and when you christen him
I'll be his Godfather.

BEGGAR

O Sir, you are merry with me.
In grange or farm this Hundred scarcely owns
A dog that does not know me.—These good Folks,
For love of God, I must not pass their doors;
But I'll be back with my best speed: for you—
God bless and thank you both, my gentle Masters.
[*Exit* Beggar.

MARMADUKE (*to himself*)

The cruel Viper!—Poor devoted Maid,
Now I *do* love thee.

OSWALD

I am thunderstruck.

MARMADUKE

Where is she—holla!
[*Calling to the* Beggar, *who returns; he looks at her stedfastly.*
You are Idonea's Mother?—
Nay, be not terrified—it does me good
To look upon you.

OSWALD (*interrupting*)

In a peasant's dress
You saw, who was it?

BEGGAR

Nay, I dare not speak;
He is a man, if it should come to his ears
I never shall be heard of more.

OSWALD

Lord Clifford?

BEGGAR

What can I do? believe me, gentle Sirs,
I love her, though I dare not call her daughter.

OSWALD

Lord Clifford—did you see him talk with Herbert?

BEGGAR

Yes, to my sorrow—under the great oak
At Herbert's door—and when he stood beside
The blind Man—at the silent Girl he looked
With such a look—it makes me tremble, Sir,
To think of it.

OSWALD

Enough! you may depart.

MARMADUKE (*to himself*)

Father!—to God himself we cannot give
A holier name; and, under such a mask,
To lead a Spirit, spotless as the blessed,
To that abhorrèd den of brutish vice!—
Oswald, the firm foundation of my life
Is going from under me; these strange discoveries—
Looked at from every point of fear or hope,
Duty, or love—involve, I feel, my ruin.

ACT II

SCENE—*A Chamber in the Hostel*—OSWALD *alone*, *rising from a Table on which he had been writing*

OSWALD

They chose *him* for their Chief!—what covert part
He, in the preference, modest Youth, might take,
I neither know nor care. The insult bred

More of contempt than hatred; both are flown;
That either e'er existed is my shame:
'Twas a dull spark—a most unnatural fire
That died the moment the air breathed upon it.
—These fools of feeling are mere birds of winter
That haunt some barren island of the north,
Where, if a famishing man stretch forth his hand,
They think it is to feed them. I have left him
To solitary meditation;—now
For a few swelling phrases, and a flash
Of truth, enough to dazzle and to blind,
And he is mine for ever—here he comes.

Enter MARMADUKE

MARMADUKE

These ten years she has moved her lips all day
And never speaks!

OSWALD

Who is it?

MARMADUKE

I have seen her.

OSWALD

Oh! the poor tenant of that ragged homestead,
Her whom the Monster, Clifford, drove to madness.

MARMADUKE

I met a peasant near the spot; he told me,
These ten years she had sate all day alone
Within those empty walls.

OSWALD

I too have seen her;
Chancing to pass this way some six months gone,
At midnight, I betook me to the Churchyard:
The moon shone clear, the air was still, so still

The trees were silent as the graves beneath them.
Long did I watch, and saw her pacing round
Upon the self-same spot, still round and round,
Her lips for ever moving.

MARMADUKE

At her door
Rooted I stood; for, looking at the woman,
I thought I saw the skeleton of Idonea.

OSWALD

But the pretended Father——

MARMADUKE

Earthly law
Measures not crimes like his.

OSWALD

We rank not, happily,
With those who take the spirit of their rule
From that soft class of devotees who feel
Reverence for life so deeply, that they spare
The verminous brood, and cherish what they spare
While feeding on their bodies. Would that Idonea
Were present, to the end that we might hear
What she can urge in his defence; she loves him.

MARMADUKE

Yes, loves him; 'tis a truth that multiplies
His guilt a thousand-fold.

OSWALD

'Tis most perplexing:
What must be done?

MARMADUKE

We will conduct her hither;
These walls shall witness it—from first to last
He shall reveal himself.

OSWALD

Happy are we,
Who live in these disputed tracts, that own
No law but what each man makes for himself;
Here justice has indeed a field of triumph.

MARMADUKE

Let us begone and bring her hither;—here
The truth shall be laid open, his guilt proved
Before her face. The rest be left to me.

OSWALD

You will be firm: but though we well may trust
The issue to the justice of the cause,
Caution must not be flung aside; remember,
Yours is no common life. Self-stationed here,
Upon these savage confines, we have seen you
Stand like an isthmus 'twixt two stormy seas
That oft have checked their fury at your bidding.
'Mid the deep holds of Solway's mossy waste,
Your single virtue has transformed a Band
Of fierce barbarians into Ministers
Of peace and order. Aged men with tears
Have blessed their steps, the fatherless retire
For shelter to their banners. But it is,
As you must needs have deeply felt, it is
In darkness and in tempest that we seek
The majesty of Him who rules the world.
Benevolence, that has not heart to use
The wholesome ministry of pain and evil,
Becomes at last weak and contemptible.
Your generous qualities have won due praise,
But vigorous Spirits look for something more
Than Youth's spontaneous products; and to-day
You will not disappoint them; and hereafter——

MARMADUKE

You are wasting words; hear me then, once for all:
You are a Man—and therefore, if compassion,
Which to our kind is natural as life,
Be known unto you, you will love this Woman,
Even as I do; but I should loathe the light,
If I could think one weak or partial feeling——

OSWALD

You will forgive me——

MARMADUKE

If I ever knew
My heart, could penetrate its inmost core,
'Tis at this moment.—Oswald, I have loved
To be the friend and father of the oppressed,
A comforter of sorrow;—there is something
Which looks like a transition in my soul,
And yet it is not.—Let us lead him hither.

OSWALD

Stoop for a moment; 'tis an act of justice;
And where's the triumph if the delegate
Must fall in the execution of his office?
The deed is done—if you will have it so—
Here where we stand—that tribe of vulgar wretches
(You saw them gathering for the festival)
Rush in—the villains seize us—

MARMADUKE

Seize!

OSWALD

Yes, they—
Men who are little given to sift and weigh—
Would wreak on us the passion of the moment.

MARMADUKE

The cloud will soon disperse—farewell—but stay,
Thou wilt relate the story.

OSWALD

Am I neither
To bear a part in this Man's punishment,
Nor be its witness?

MARMADUKE

I had many hopes
That were most dear to me, and some will bear
To be transferred to thee.

OSWALD

When I'm dishonoured!

MARMADUKE

I would preserve thee. How may this be done?

OSWALD

By showing that you look beyond the instant.
A few leagues hence we shall have open ground,
And nowhere upon earth is place so fit
To look upon the deed. Before we enter
The barren Moor, hangs from a beetling rock
The shattered Castle in which Clifford oft
Has held infernal orgies—with the gloom,
And very superstition of the place,
Seasoning his wickedness. The Debauchee
Would there perhaps have gathered the first fruits
Of this mock Father's guilt.

Enter Host *conducting* HERBERT

HOST

The Baron Herbert
Attends your pleasure.

OSWALD (*to* Host)

We are ready—
(*to* HERBERT) Sir!
I hope you are refreshed.—I have just written
A notice for your Daughter, that she may know
What is become of you.—You'll sit down and sign it;
'Twill glad her heart to see her father's signature.
[*Gives the letter he had written.*

HERBERT

Thanks for your care.
[*Sits down and writes.* *Exit* Host.

OSWALD (*aside to* MARMADUKE)

Perhaps it would be useful
That you too should subscribe your name.
[MARMADUKE *overlooks* HERBERT—*then writes—examines the letter eagerly.*

MARMADUKE

I cannot leave this paper.
[*He puts it up, agitated.*

OSWALD (*aside*)

Dastard! Come.
[MARMADUKE *goes towards* HERBERT *and supports him* — MARMADUKE *tremblingly beckons* OSWALD *to take his place.*

MARMADUKE (*as he quits* HERBERT)

There is a palsy in his limbs—he shakes.
[*Exeunt* OSWALD *and* HERBERT—MARMADUKE *following.*

SCENE *changes to a Wood—a Group of* Pilgrims, *and* IDONEA *with them*

FIRST PILGRIM

A grove of darker and more lofty shade
I never saw.

SECOND PILGRIM

The music of the birds
Drops deadened from a roof so thick with leaves.

OLD PILGRIM

This news! It made my heart leap up with joy.

IDONEA

I scarcely can believe it.

OLD PILGRIM

Myself, I heard
The Sheriff read, in open Court, a letter
Which purported it was the royal pleasure
The Baron Herbert, who, as was supposed,
Had taken refuge in this neighbourhood,
Should be forthwith restored. The hearing, Lady,
Filled my dim eyes with tears.—When I returned
From Palestine, and brought with me a heart,
Though rich in heavenly, poor in earthly, comfort,
I met your Father, then a wandering Outcast:
He had a Guide, a Shepherd's boy; but grieved
He was that One so young should pass his youth
In such sad service; and he parted with him.
We joined our tales of wretchedness together,
And begged our daily bread from door to door.
I talk familiarly to you, sweet Lady!
For once you loved me.

IDONEA

You shall back with me
And see your Friend again. The good old Man
Will be rejoiced to greet you.

OLD PILGRIM

It seems but yesterday
That a fierce storm o'ertook us, worn with travel,
In a deep wood remote from any town.
A cave that opened to the road presented
A friendly shelter, and we entered in.

IDONEA

And I was with you?

OLD PILGRIM

If indeed 'twas you—
But you were then a tottering Little-one—
We sate us down. The sky grew dark and darker:
I struck my flint, and built up a small fire
With rotten boughs and leaves, such as the winds
Of many autumns in the cave had piled.
Meanwhile the storm fell heavy on the woods;
Our little fire sent forth a cheering warmth
And we were comforted, and talked of comfort;
But 'twas an angry night, and o'er our heads
The thunder rolled in peals that would have made
A sleeping man uneasy in his bed.
O Lady, you have need to love your Father.
His voice—methinks I hear it now, his voice
When, after a broad flash that filled the cave,
He said to me, that he had seen his Child,
A face (no cherub's face more beautiful)
Revealed by lustre brought with it from heaven;
And it was you, dear Lady!

IDONEA

God be praised,
That I have been his comforter till now!

And will be so through every change of fortune
And every sacrifice his peace requires.—
Let us be gone with speed, that he may hear
These joyful tidings from no lips but mine.
[*Exeunt* IDONEA *and* Pilgrims.

SCENE—*The Area of a half-ruined Castle—on one side the entrance to a dungeon*—OSWALD *and* MARMADUKE *pacing backwards and forwards.*

MARMADUKE

'Tis a wild night.

OSWALD

I'd give my cloak and bonnet
For sight of a warm fire.

MARMADUKE

The wind blows keen;
My hands are numb.

OSWALD

Ha! ha! 'tis nipping cold.
[*Blowing his fingers.*
I long for news of our brave Comrades; Lacy
Would drive those Scottish Rovers to their dens
If once they blew a horn this side the Tweed.

MARMADUKE

I think I see a second range of Towers;
This castle has another Area—come,
Let us examine it.

OSWALD

'Tis a bitter night;
I hope Idonea is well housed. That horseman,
Who at full speed swept by us where the wood
Roared in the tempest, was within an ace
Of sending to his grave our precious Charge:
That would have been a vile mischance.

MARMADUKE

It would.

OSWALD

Justice had been most cruelly defrauded.

MARMADUKE

Most cruelly.

OSWALD

As up the steep we clomb,
I saw a distant fire in the north-east;
I took it for the blaze of Cheviot Beacon:
With proper speed our quarters may be gained
To-morrow evening.

[*Looks restlessly towards the mouth of the dungeon.*

MARMADUKE

When, upon the plank,
I had led him 'cross[1] the torrent, his voice blessed me:
You could not hear, for the foam beat the rocks
With deafening noise,—the benediction fell
Back on himself; but changed into a curse.

OSWALD

As well indeed it might.

MARMADUKE

And this you deem
The fittest place?

OSWALD (*aside*)

He is growing pitiful.

MARMADUKE (*listening*)

What an odd moaning that is!—

OSWALD.

Mighty odd
The wind should pipe a little, while we stand

[1] 1845.
. . . o'er . . . . . 1842.

Cooling our heels in this way!—I'll begin
And count the stars.

MARMADUKE (*still listening*)

That dog of his, you are sure,
Could not come after us—he *must* have perished;
The torrent would have dashed an oak to splinters.
You said you did not like his looks—that he
Would trouble us; if he were here again,
I swear the sight of him would quail me more
Than twenty armies.

OSWALD

How?

MARMADUKE

The old blind Man,
When you had told him the mischance, was troubled
Even to the shedding of some natural tears
Into the torrent over which he hung,
Listening in vain.

OSWALD

He has a tender heart!
[OSWALD *offers to go down into the dungeon.*

MARMADUKE

How now, what mean you?

OSWALD

Truly, I was going
To waken our stray Baron. Were there not
A farm or dwelling-house within five leagues,
We should deserve to wear a cap and bells,
Three good round years, for playing the fool here
In such a night as this.

MARMADUKE

Stop, stop.

OSWALD

Perhaps,
You'd better like we should descend together,
And lie down by his side—what say you to it?
Three of us—we should keep each other warm:
I'll answer for it that our four-legged friend
Shall not disturb us; further I'll not engage;
Come, come, for manhood's sake!

MARMADUKE

These drowsy shiverings,
This mortal stupor which is creeping over me,
What do they mean? were this my single body
Opposed to armies, not a nerve would tremble:
Why do I tremble now?—Is not the depth
Of this Man's crimes beyond the reach of thought?
And yet, in plumbing the abyss for judgment,
Something I strike upon which turns my mind
Back on herself, I think, again—my breast
Concentres all the terrors of the Universe:
I look at him and tremble like a child.

OSWALD

Is it possible?

MARMADUKE

One thing you noticed not:
Just as we left the glen a clap of thunder
Burst on the mountains with hell-rousing force.
This is a time, said he, when guilt may shudder;
But there's a Providence for them who walk
In helplessness, when innocence is with them.
At this audacious blasphemy, I thought
The spirit of vengeance seemed to ride the air.

OSWALD

Why are you not the man you were that moment?

[*He draws* MARMADUKE *to the dungeon.*

MARMADUKE

You say he was asleep,—look at this arm,
And tell me if 'tis fit for such a work.
Oswald, Oswald! [*Leans upon* OSWALD.

OSWALD

This is some sudden seizure!

MARMADUKE

A most strange faintness,—will you hunt me out
A draught of water?

OSWALD

Nay, to see you thus
Moves me beyond my bearing.—I will try
To gain the torrent's brink. [*Exit* OSWALD.

MARMADUKE (*after a pause*)

It seems an age
Since that Man left me.—No, I am not lost.

HERBERT (*at the mouth of the dungeon*)

Give me your hand; where are you, Friends? and tell me
How goes the night.

MARMADUKE

'Tis hard to measure time,
In such a weary night, and such a place.

HERBERT

I do not hear the voice of my friend Oswald.

MARMADUKE

A minute past, he went to fetch a draught
Of water from the torrent. 'Tis, you'll say,
A cheerless beverage.

HERBERT

How good it was in you
To stay behind!—Hearing at first no answer,
I was alarmed.

MARMADUKE

No wonder; this is a place
That well may put some fears into *your* heart.

HERBERT

Why so? a roofless rock had been a comfort,
Storm-beaten and bewildered as we were;
And in a night like this, to lend your cloaks
To make a bed for me!—My Girl will weep
When she is told of it.

MARMADUKE

This Daughter of yours
Is very dear to you.

HERBERT

Oh! but you are young;
Over your head twice twenty years must roll,
With all their natural weight of sorrow and pain,
Ere can be known to you how much a Father
May love his Child.

MARMADUKE

Thank you, old Man, for this!
[*Aside.*

HERBERT

Fallen am I, and worn out, a useless Man;
Kindly have you protected me to-night,
And no return have I to make but prayers;
May you in age be blest with such a daughter!—
When from the Holy Land I had returned
Sightless, and from my heritage was driven,
A wretched Outcast—but this strain of thought
Would lead me to talk fondly.

MARMADUKE

Do not fear;
Your words are precious to my ears; go on.

HERBERT

You will forgive me, but my heart runs over.
When my old Leader slipped into the flood
And perished, what a piercing outcry you
Sent after him. I have loved you ever since.
You start—where are we?

MARMADUKE

Oh, there is no danger;
The cold blast struck me.

HERBERT

'Twas a foolish question.

MARMADUKE

But when you were an Outcast?—Heaven is just;
Your piety would not miss its due reward;
The little Orphan then would be your succour,
And do good service, though she knew it not.

HERBERT

I turned me from the dwellings of my Fathers,
Where none but those who trampled on my rights
Seemed to remember me. To the wide world
I bore her, in my arms; her looks won pity;
She was my Raven in the wilderness,
And brought me food. Have I not cause to love her?

MARMADUKE

Yes.

HERBERT

More than ever Parent loved a Child?

MARMADUKE

Yes, yes.

HERBERT

I will not murmur, merciful God!
I will not murmur; blasted as I have been,
Thou hast left me ears to hear my Daughter's voice,
And arms to fold her to my heart. Submissively
Thee I adore, and find my rest in faith.

Enter OSWALD

OSWALD

Herbert!—confusion! (*aside*). Here it is, my Friend,
[*Presents the Horn.*
A charming beverage for you to carouse,
This bitter night.

HERBERT

Ha! Oswald! ten bright crosses
I would have given, not many minutes gone,
To have heard your voice.

OSWALD

Your couch, I fear, good Baron,
Has been but comfortless; and yet that place,
When the tempestuous wind first drove us hither,
Felt warm as a wren's nest. You'd better turn
And under covert rest till break of day,
Or till the storm abate.
(*To* MARMADUKE *aside.*) He has restored you.
No doubt you have been nobly entertained?
But soft!—how came he forth? The Night-mare Conscience
Has driven him out of harbour?

MARMADUKE

I believe
You have guessed right.

HERBERT

The trees renew their murmur:
Come, let us house together.
[OSWALD *conducts him to the dungeon.*

OSWALD (*returns*)

Had I not
Esteemed you worthy to conduct the affair
To its most fit conclusion, do you think
I would so long have struggled with my Nature,
And smothered all that's man in me?—away!—
[*Looking towards the dungeon.*
This man's the property of him who best
Can feel his crimes. I have resigned a privilege;
It now becomes my duty to resume it.

MARMADUKE

Touch not a finger—

OSWALD

What then must be done?

MARMADUKE

Which way soe'er I turn, I am perplexed.

OSWALD

Now, on my life, I grieve for you. The misery
Of doubt is insupportable. Pity, the facts
Did not admit of stronger evidence;
Twelve honest men, plain men, would set us right;
Their verdict would abolish these weak scruples.

MARMADUKE

Weak! I am weak—there does my torment lie,
Feeding itself.

OSWALD

Verily, when he said
How his old heart would leap to hear her steps,
You thought his voice the echo of Idonea's.

MARMADUKE

And never heard a sound so terrible.

OSWALD

Perchance you think so now?

MARMADUKE

I cannot do it:
Twice did I spring to grasp his withered throat,
When such a sudden weakness fell upon me,
I could have dropped asleep upon his breast.

OSWALD

Justice—is there not thunder in the word?
Shall it be law to stab the petty robber
Who aims but at our purse; and shall this Parricide—
Worse is he far, far worse (if foul dishonour
Be worse than death) to that confiding Creature
Whom he to more than filial love and duty
Hath falsely trained—shall he fulfil his purpose?
But you are fallen.

MARMADUKE

Fallen should I be indeed—
Murder—perhaps asleep, blind, old, alone,
Betrayed, in darkness! Here to strike the blow—
Away! away!— [*Flings away his sword.*

OSWALD

Nay, I have done with you:
We'll lead him to the Convent. He shall live,
And she shall love him. With unquestioned title
He shall be seated in his Barony,
And we too chant the praise of his good deeds.
I now perceive we do mistake our masters,
And most despise the men who best can teach us:
Henceforth it shall be said that bad men only

Are brave: Clifford is brave; and that old Man
Is brave.

[*Taking* MARMADUKE'S *sword and giving it to him.*

To Clifford's arms he would have led
His Victim—haply to this desolate house.

MARMADUKE (*advancing to the dungeon*)

It must be ended!—

OSWALD

Softly; do not rouse him;
He will deny it to the last. He lies
Within the Vault, a spear's length to the left.

[MARMADUKE *descends to the dungeon.*

(*Alone.*) The Villains rose in mutiny to destroy me;
I could have quelled the Cowards, but this Stripling
Must needs step in, and save my life. The look
With which he gave the boon—I see it now!
The same that tempted me to loathe the gift.—
For this old venerable Grey-beard—faith
'Tis his own fault if he hath got a face
Which doth play tricks with them that look on it:
'Twas this that put it in my thoughts—that countenance—
His staff—his figure—Murder!—what, of whom?
We kill a worn-out horse, and who but women
Sigh at the deed? Hew down a withered tree,
And none look grave but dotards. He may live
To thank me for this service. Rainbow arches,
Highways of dreaming passion, have too long,
Young as he is, diverted wish and hope
From the unpretending ground we mortals tread;—
Then shatter the delusion, break it up
And set him free. What follows? I have learned
That things will work to ends the slaves o' the world
Do never dream of. I *have* been what he—
This Boy—when he comes forth with bloody hands—
Might envy, and am now,—but he shall know

What I am now— [*Goes and listens at the dungeon.*
Praying or parleying ?—tut !
Is he not eyeless ? He has been half-dead
These fifteen years—

Enter female Beggar *with two or three of her Companions.*

(*Turning abruptly.*) *Ha ! speak*—what Thing art thou ?
(*Recognises her.*) Heavens ! my good friend ! [*To her.*

BEGGAR

Forgive me, gracious Sir !—

OSWALD (*to her companions*)

Begone, ye Slaves, or I will raise a whirlwind
And send ye dancing to the clouds, like leaves.
[*They retire affrighted.*

BEGGAR

Indeed we meant no harm ; we lodge sometimes
In this deserted Castle—*I repent me.*
[OSWALD *goes to the dungeon—listens—returns to the* Beggar.

OSWALD

Woman, thou hast a helpless Infant—keep
Thy secret for its sake, or verily
That wretched life of thine shall be the forfeit.

BEGGAR

I *do* repent me, Sir ; I fear the curse
Of that blind Man. 'Twas not your money, Sir,——

OSWALD

Begone !

BEGGAR (*going*)

There is some wicked deed in hand :
[*Aside.*
Would I could find the old Man and his Daughter.
[*Exit* Beggar.

MARMADUKE *re-enters from the dungeon*

OSWALD

It is all over then ;—your foolish fears
Are hushed to sleep, by your own act and deed,
Made quiet as he is.

MARMADUKE

Why came you down ?
And when I felt your hand upon my arm
And spake to you, why did you give no answer ?
Feared you to waken him ? he must have been
In a deep sleep. I whispered to him thrice.
There are the strangest echoes in that place !

OSWALD

Tut ! let them gabble till the day of doom.

MARMADUKE

Scarcely, by groping, had I reached the Spot,
When round my wrist I felt a cord drawn tight,
As if the blind Man's dog were pulling at it.

OSWALD

But after that ?

MARMADUKE

The features of Idonea
Lurked in his face——

OSWALD

Psha ! Never to these eyes
Will retribution show itself again
With aspect so inviting. Why forbid me
To share your triumph ?

MARMADUKE

Yes, her very look,
Smiling in sleep——

OSWALD

A pretty feat of Fancy!

MARMADUKE

Though but a glimpse, it sent me to my prayers.

OSWALD

Is he alive?

MARMADUKE

What mean you? who alive?

OSWALD

Herbert! since you will have it, Baron Herbert;
He who will gain his Seignory when Idonea
Hath become Clifford's harlot—is *he* living?

MARMADUKE

The old Man in that dungeon *is* alive.

OSWALD

Henceforth, then, will I never in camp or field
Obey you more. Your weakness, to the Band,
Shall be proclaimed: brave Men, they all shall hear it.
You a protector of humanity!
Avenger you of outraged innocence!

MARMADUKE

'Twas dark—dark as the grave; yet did I see,
Saw him—his face turned toward me; and I tell thee
Idonea's filial countenance was there
To baffle me—it put me to my prayers.
Upwards I cast my eyes, and, through a crevice,
Beheld a star twinkling above my head,
And, by the living God, I could not do it.

[*Sinks exhausted.*

OSWALD (*to himself*)

Now may I perish if this turn do more
Than make me change my course.
(*To* MARMADUKE.) Dear Marmaduke,
My words were rashly spoken; I recal them:
I feel my error; shedding human blood
Is a most serious thing.

MARMADUKE

Not I alone,
Thou too art deep in guilt.

OSWALD

We have indeed
Been most presumptuous. There *is* guilt in this,
Else could so strong a mind have ever known
These trepidations? Plain it is that Heaven
Has marked out this foul Wretch as one whose crimes
Must never come before a mortal judgment-seat,
Or be chastised by mortal instruments.

MARMADUKE

A thought that's worth a thousand worlds!
[*Goes towards the dungeon.*

OSWALD

I grieve
That, in my zeal, I have caused you so much pain.

MARMADUKE

Think not of that! 'tis over—we are safe.

OSWALD (*as if to himself, yet speaking aloud*)

The truth is hideous, but how stifle it?
[*Turning to* MARMADUKE.
Give me your sword—nay, here are stones and fragments,
The least of which would beat out a man's brains;
Or you might drive your head against that wall.

No! this is not the place to hear the tale:
It should be told you pinioned in your bed,
Or on some vast and solitary plain
Blown to you from a trumpet.

MARMADUKE

Why talk thus?
Whate'er the monster brooding in your breast
I care not: fear I have none, and cannot fear——

[The sound of a horn is heard.

That horn again—'Tis some one of our Troop;
What do they here? Listen!

OSWALD

What! dogged like thieves!

Enter WALLACE *and* LACY, *etc.*

LACY

You are found at last, thanks to the vagrant Troop
For not misleading us.

OSWALD (*looking at* WALLACE)

That subtle Greybeard—
I'd rather see my father's ghost.

LACY (*to* MARMADUKE)

My Captain,
We come by order of the Band. Belike
You have not heard that Henry has at last
Dissolved the Barons' League, and sent abroad
His Sheriffs with fit force to reinstate
The genuine owners of such Lands and Baronies
As, in these long commotions, have been seized.
His Power is this way tending. It befits us
To stand upon our guard, and with our swords
Defend the innocent.

MARMADUKE

Lacy! we look
But at the surfaces of things; we hear
Of towns in flames, fields ravaged, young and old
Driven out in troops to want and nakedness;
Then grasp our swords and rush upon a cure
That flatters us, because it asks not thought:
The deeper malady is better hid;
The world is poisoned at the heart.

LACY

What mean you?

WALLACE

(*whose eye has been fixed suspiciously upon* OSWALD)
Ay, what is it you mean?

MARMADUKE

Hark'ee, my Friends;—
[*Appearing gay.*
Were there a Man who, being weak and helpless
And most forlorn, should bribe a Mother, pressed
By penury, to yield him up her Daughter,
A little Infant, and instruct the Babe,
Prattling upon his knee, to call him Father——

LACY

Why, if his heart be tender, that offence
I could forgive him.

MARMADUKE (*going on*)

And should he make the Child
An instrument of falsehood, should he teach her
To stretch her arms, and dim the gladsome light
Of infant playfulness with piteous looks
Of misery that was not——

LACY

Troth, 'tis hard—
But in a world like ours——

MARMADUKE (*changing his tone*)

This self-same Man—
Even while he printed kisses on the cheek
Of this poor Babe, and taught its innocent tongue
To lisp the name of Father—could he look
To the unnatural harvest of that time
When he should give her up, a Woman grown,
To him who bid the highest in the market
Of foul pollution——

LACY

The whole visible world
Contains not such a Monster!

MARMADUKE

For this purpose
Should he resolve to taint her Soul by means
Which bathe the limbs in sweat to think of them;
Should he, by tales which would draw tears from iron,
Work on her nature, and so turn compassion
And gratitude to ministers of vice,
And make the spotless spirit of filial love
Prime mover in a plot to damn his Victim
Both soul and body——

WALLACE

'Tis too horrible;
Oswald, what say you to it?

LACY

Hew him down,
And fling him to the ravens.

MARMADUKE

But his aspect
It is so meek, his countenance so venerable.

WALLACE (*with an appearance of mistrust*)

But how, what say you, Oswald?

LACY (*at the same moment*)

Stab him, were it
Before the Altar.

MARMADUKE

What, if he were sick,
Tottering upon the very verge of life,
And old, and blind——

LACY

Blind, say you?

OSWALD (*coming forward*)

Are we Men,
Or own we baby Spirits? Genuine courage
Is not an accidental quality,
A thing dependent for its casual birth
On opposition and impediment.
Wisdom, if Justice speak the word, beats down
The giant's strength; and, at the voice of Justice,
Spares not the worm. The giant and the worm—
She weighs them in one scale. The wiles of woman,
And craft of age, seducing reason, first
Made weakness a protection, and obscured
The moral shapes of things. His tender cries
And helpless innocence—do they protect
The infant lamb? and shall the infirmities,
Which have enabled this enormous Culprit
To perpetrate his crimes, serve as a Sanctuary
To cover him from punishment? Shame!—Justice,
Admitting no resistance, bends alike
The feeble and the strong. She needs not here
Her bonds and chains, which make the mighty feeble.
—We recognise in this old Man a victim
Prepared already for the sacrifice.

LACY

By heaven, his words are reason!

OSWALD

Yes, my Friends,
His countenance is meek and venerable;
And, by the Mass, to see him at his prayers!—
I am of flesh and blood, and may I perish
When my heart does not ache to think of it!—
Poor Victim! not a virtue under heaven
But what was made an engine to ensnare thee;
But yet I trust, Idonea, thou art safe.

LACY

Idonea!

WALLACE

How! What? your Idonea?
[*To* MARMADUKE.

MARMADUKE

Mine;
But now no longer mine. You know Lord Clifford;
He is the Man to whom the Maiden—pure
As beautiful, and gentle and benign,
And in her ample heart loving even me—
Was to be yielded up.

LACY

Now, by the head
Of my own child, this Man must die; my hand,
A worthier wanting, shall itself entwine
In his grey hairs!—

MARMADUKE (*to* LACY)

I love the Father in thee.
You know me, Friends; I have a heart to feel,
And I have felt, more than perhaps becomes me
Or duty sanctions.

LACY

We will have ample justice.
Who are we, Friends? Do we not live on ground
Where Souls are self-defended, free to grow

Like mountain oaks rocked by the stormy wind?
Mark the Almighty Wisdom, which decreed
This monstrous crime to be laid open—*here*,
Where Reason has an eye that she can use,
And Men alone are Umpires. To the Camp
He shall be led, and there, the Country round
All gathered to the spot, in open day
Shall Nature be avenged.

OSWALD

'Tis nobly thought;
His death will be a monument for ages.

MARMADUKE (*to* LACY)

I thank you for that hint. He shall be brought
Before the Camp, and would that best and wisest
Of every country might be present. There,
His crime shall be proclaimed; and for the rest
It shall be done as Wisdom shall decide:
Meanwhile, do you two hasten back and see
That all is well prepared.

WALLACE

We will obey you.
(*Aside.*) But softly! we must look a little nearer.

MARMADUKE

Tell where you found us. At some future time
I will explain the cause. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III

SCENE—*The door of the Hostel, a group of* Pilgrims *as before;* IDONEA *and the* Host *among them*

HOST

Lady, you'll find your Father at the Convent
As I have told you: He left us yesterday

With two Companions ; one of them, as seemed,
His most familiar Friend. (*Going.*) There was a letter
Of which I heard them speak, but that I fancy
Has been forgotten.

IDONEA (*to* Host)
Farewell !

HOST
Gentle pilgrims,
St. Cuthbert speed you on your holy errand.
[*Exeunt* IDONEA *and* Pilgrims.

SCENE—*A desolate Moor*

OSWALD (*alone*)

OSWALD
Carry him to the Camp ! Yes, to the Camp.
Oh, Wisdom ! a most wise resolve ! and then,
That half a word should blow it to the winds !
This last device must end my work.—Methinks
It were a pleasant pastime to construct
A scale and table of belief—as thus—
Two columns, one for passion, one for proof ;
Each rises as the other falls : and first,
Passion a unit and *against* us—proof—
Nay, we must travel in another path,
Or we're stuck fast for ever ;—passion, then,
Shall be a unit *for* us ; proof—no, passion !
We'll not insult thy majesty by time,
Person, and place—the where, the when, the how,
And all particulars that dull brains require
To constitute the spiritless shape of Fact,
They bow to, calling the idol, Demonstration.
A whipping to the Moralists who preach
That misery is a sacred thing : for me,
I know no cheaper engine to degrade a man,

Nor any half so sure. This Stripling's mind
Is shaken till the dregs float on the surface;
And, in the storm and anguish of the heart,
He talks of a transition in his Soul,
And dreams that he is happy. We dissect
The senseless body, and why not the mind?—
These are strange sights—the mind of man, upturned,
Is in all natures a strange spectacle;
In some a hideous one—hem! shall I stop?
No.—Thoughts and feelings will sink deep, but then
They have no substance. Pass but a few minutes,
And something shall be done which Memory
May touch, whene'er her Vassals are at work.

Enter MARMADUKE, *from behind*

OSWALD (*turning to meet him*)

But listen, for my peace——

MARMADUKE

Why, I *believe* you.

OSWALD

But hear the proofs——

MARMADUKE

Ay, prove that when two peas
Lie snugly in a pod, the pod must then
Be larger than the peas—prove this—'twere matter
Worthy the hearing. Fool was I to dream
It ever could be otherwise!

OSWALD

Last night
When I returned with water from the brook,
I overheard the Villains—every word
Like red-hot iron burnt into my heart.
Said one, "It is agreed on. The blind Man
Shall feign a sudden illness, and the Girl,
Who on her journey must proceed alone,

Under pretence of violence, be seized.
She is," continued the detested Slave,
"She is right willing—strange if she were not!—
They say, Lord Clifford is a savage man;
But, faith, to see him in his silken tunic,
Fitting his low voice to the minstrel's harp,
There's witchery in't. I never knew a maid
That could withstand it. True," continued he,
"When we arranged the affair, she wept a little
(Not the less welcome to my Lord for that)
And said, 'My Father he will have it so.'"

MARMADUKE

I am your hearer.

OSWALD

This I caught, and more
That may not be retold to any ear.
The obstinate bolt of a small iron door
Detained them near the gateway of the Castle.
By a dim lantern's light I saw that wreaths
Of flowers were in their hands, as if designed
For festive decoration; and they said,
With brutal laughter and most foul allusion,
That they should share the banquet with their Lord
And his new Favorite.

MARMADUKE

Misery!—

OSWALD

I knew
How you would be disturbed by this dire news,
And therefore chose this solitary Moor,
Here to impart the tale, of which, last night,
I strove to ease my mind, when our two Comrades,
Commissioned by the Band, burst in upon us.

MARMADUKE

Last night, when moved to lift the avenging steel,

I did believe all things were shadows—yea,
Living or dead all things were bodiless,
Or but the mutual mockeries of body,
Till that same star summoned me back again.
Now I could laugh till my ribs ached. Fool!
To let a creed, built in the heart of things,
Dissolve before a twinkling atom!—Oswald,
I could fetch lessons out of wiser schools
Than you have entered, were it worth the pains.
Young as I am, I might go forth a teacher,
And you should see how deeply I could reason
Of love in all its shapes, beginnings, ends;
Of moral qualities in their diverse aspects;
Of actions, and their laws and tendencies.

OSWALD

You take it as it merits——

MARMADUKE

One a King,
General or Cham, Sultan or Emperor,
Strews twenty acres of good meadow-ground
With carcases, in lineament and shape
And substance, nothing differing from his own,
But that they cannot stand up of themselves;
Another sits i' th' sun, and by the hour
Floats kingcups in the brook—a Hero one
We call, and scorn the other as Time's spendthrift;
But have they not a world of common ground
To occupy—both fools, or wise alike,
Each in his way?

OSWALD

Troth, I begin to think so.

MARMADUKE

Now for the corner-stone of my philosophy:
I would not give a denier for the man
Who, on such provocation as this earth

Yields, could not chuck his babe beneath the chin,
And send it with a fillip to its grave.

OSWALD

Nay, you leave me behind.

MARMADUKE

That such a One,
So pious in demeanour! in his look
So saintly and so pure!——Hark'ee, my Friend,
I'll plant myself before Lord Clifford's Castle,
A surly mastiff kennels at the gate,
And he shall howl and I will laugh, a medley
Most tunable.

OSWALD

In faith, a pleasant scheme;
But take your sword along with you, for that
Might in such neighbourhood find seemly use.—
But first, how wash our hands of this old Man?

MARMADUKE

Oh yes, that mole, that viper in the path;
Plague on my memory, him I had forgotten.

OSWALD

You know we left him sitting—see him yonder.

MARMADUKE

Ha! ha!—

OSWALD

As 'twill be but a moment's work, 124
I will stroll on; you follow when 'tis done. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to another part of the Moor at a short distance*—HERBERT *is discovered seated on a stone*

HERBERT

A sound of laughter, too!—'tis well—I feared,
The Stranger had some pitiable sorrow

Pressing upon his solitary heart.
Hush!—'tis the feeble and earth-loving wind
That creeps along the bells of the crisp heather.
Alas! 'tis cold—I shiver in the sunshine—
What can this mean? There is a psalm that speaks
Of God's parental mercies—with Idonea
I used to sing it.—Listen!—what foot is there?

Enter MARMADUKE

MARMADUKE (*aside—looking at* HERBERT)

And I have loved this Man! and *she* hath loved him!
And I loved her, and she loves the Lord Clifford!
And there it ends;—if this be not enough
To make mankind merry for evermore,
Then plain it is as day, that eyes were made
For a wise purpose—verily to weep with!
[*Looking round.*
A pretty prospect this, a masterpiece
Of Nature, finished with most curious skill!
(*To* HERBERT.) Good Baron, have you ever practised tillage?
Pray tell me what this land is worth by the acre?

HERBERT

How glad I am to hear your voice! I know not
Wherein I have offended you;—last night
I found in you the kindest of Protectors;
This morning, when I spoke of weariness,
You from my shoulder took my scrip and threw it
About your own; but for these two hours past
Once only have you spoken, when the lark
Whirred from among the fern beneath our feet,
And I, no coward in my better days,
Was almost terrified.

MARMADUKE

That's excellent!—
So, you bethought you of the many ways

In which a man may come to his end, whose crimes
Have roused all Nature up against him—pshaw!—

HERBERT

For mercy's sake, is nobody in sight?
No traveller, peasant, herdsman?

MARMADUKE

Not a soul:
Here is a tree, raggèd, and bent, and bare,
That turns its goat's-beard flakes of pea-green moss
From the stern breathing of the rough sea-wind;
This have we, but no other company:
Commend me to the place. If a man should die
And leave his body here, it were all one
As he were twenty fathoms underground.

HERBERT

Where is our common Friend?

MARMADUKE

A ghost, methinks—
The Spirit of a murdered man, for instance—
Might have fine room to ramble about here,
A grand domain to squeak and gibber in.

HERBERT

Lost Man! if thou have any close-pent guilt
Pressing upon thy heart, and this the hour
Of visitation——

MARMADUKE

A bold word from *you!*

HERBERT

Restore him, Heaven!

MARMADUKE

The desperate Wretch!—A Flower,
Fairest of all flowers, was she once, but now

They have snapped her from the stem—Poh! let her lie
Besoiled with mire, and let the houseless snail
Feed on her leaves. You knew her well—ay, there,
Old Man! you were a very Lynx, you knew
The worm was in her——

HERBERT

Mercy! Sir, what mean you?

MARMADUKE

You have a Daughter!

HERBERT

Oh that she were here!—
She hath an eye that sinks into all hearts,
And if I have in aught offended you,
Soon would her gentle voice make peace between us.

MARMADUKE (*aside*)

I do believe he weeps—I could weep too—
There is a vein of her voice that runs through his:
Even such a Man my fancy bodied forth
From the first moment that I loved the Maid;
And for his sake I loved her more: these tears—
I did not think that aught was left in me
Of what I have been—yes, I thank thee, Heaven!
One happy thought has passed across my mind.
—It may not be—I am cut off from man;
No more shall I be man—no more shall I
Have human feelings!—(*To* HERBERT)—Now, for a little more
About your Daughter!

HERBERT

Troops of armed men,
Met in the roads, would bless us; little children,
Rushing along in the full tide of play,
Stood silent as we passed them! I have heard
The boisterous carman, in the miry road,

Check his loud whip and hail us with mild voice,
And speak with milder voice to his poor beasts.

MARMADUKE

And whither were you going?

HERBERT

Learn, young Man,—
To fear the virtuous, and reverence misery,
Whether too much for patience, or, like mine,
Softened till it becomes a gift of mercy.

MARMADUKE

Now, this is as it should be!

HERBERT

I am weak!—
My Daughter does not know how weak I am;
And, as thou see'st, under the arch of heaven
Here do I stand, alone, to helplessness,
By the good God, our common Father, doomed!—
But I had once a spirit and an arm——

MARMADUKE

Now, for a word about your Barony:
I fancy when you left the Holy Land,
And came to—what's your title—eh? your claims
Were undisputed!

HERBERT

Like a mendicant,
Whom no one comes to meet, I stood alone;—
I murmured—but, remembering Him who feeds
The pelican and ostrich of the desert,
From my own threshold I looked up to Heaven
And did not want glimmerings of quiet hope.
So, from the court I passed, and down the brook,
Led by its murmur, to the ancient oak
I came; and when I felt its cooling shade,

I sate me down, and cannot but believe—
While in my lap I held my little Babe
And clasped her to my heart, my heart that ached
More with delight than grief—I heard a voice
Such as by Cherith on Elijah called;
It said, "I will be with thee." A little boy,
A shepherd-lad, ere yet my trance was gone,
Hailed us as if he had been sent from heaven,
And said, with tears, that he would be our guide:
I had a better guide—that innocent Babe—
Her, who hath saved me, to this hour, from harm,
From cold, from hunger, penury, and death;
To whom I owe the best of all the good
I have, or wish for, upon earth—and more
And higher far than lies within earth's bounds:
Therefore I bless her: when I think of Man,
I bless her with sad spirit,—when of God,
I bless her in the fulness of my joy!

MARMADUKE

The name of daughter in his mouth, he prays!
With nerves so steady, that the very flies
Sit unmolested on his staff.—Innocent!—
If he were innocent—then he would tremble
And be disturbed, as I am. (*Turning aside.*) I have read
In Story, what men now alive have witnessed,
How, when the People's mind was racked with doubt,
Appeal was made to the great Judge: the Accused
With naked feet walked over burning ploughshares.
Here is a Man by Nature's hand prepared
For a like trial, but more merciful.
Why else have I been led to this bleak Waste?
Bare is it, without house or track, and destitute
Of obvious shelter, as a shipless sea.
Here will I leave him—here—All-seeing God!
Such as *he* is, and sore perplexed as I am,
I will commit him to this final *Ordeal!*—

He heard a voice—a shepherd-lad came to him
And was his guide; if once, why not again,
And in this desert? If never—then the whole
Of what he says, and looks, and does, and is,
Makes up one damning falsehood. Leave him here
To cold and hunger!—Pain is of the heart,
And what are a few throes of bodily suffering
If they can waken one pang of remorse?
[*Goes up to* HERBERT.
Old Man! my wrath is as a flame burnt out,
It cannot be rekindled. Thou art here
Led by my hand to save thee from perdition:
Thou wilt have time to breathe and think——

HERBERT

Oh, Mercy!

MARMADUKE

I know the need that all men have of mercy,
And therefore leave thee to a righteous judgment.

HERBERT

My Child, my blessèd Child!

MARMADUKE

No more of that;
Thou wilt have many guides if thou art innocent;
Yea, from the utmost corners of the earth,
That Woman will come o'er this Waste to save thee.
[*He pauses and looks at* HERBERT'S *staff.*
Ha! what is here? and carved by her own hand!
[*Reads upon the staff.*
"I am eyes to the blind, saith the Lord.
He that puts his trust in me shall not fail!"
Yes, be it so;—repent and be forgiven—
God and that staff are now thy only guides.
[*He leaves* HERBERT *on the Moor.*

SCENE—*An eminence, a Beacon on the summit*

LACY, WALLACE, LENNOX, etc. etc.

SEVERAL OF THE BAND (*confusedly*)

But patience!

ONE OF THE BAND

Curses on that Traitor, Oswald!—
Our Captain made a prey to foul device!—

LENNOX (*to* WALLACE)

His tool, the wandering Beggar, made last night
A plain confession, such as leaves no doubt,
Knowing what otherwise we know too well,
That she revealed the truth. Stand by me now;
For rather would I have a nest of vipers
Between my breast-plate and my skin, than make
Oswald my special enemy, if you
Deny me your support.

LACY

We have been fooled—
But for the motive?

WALLACE

Natures such as his
Spin motives out of their own bowels, Lacy!
I learn'd this when I was a Confessor.
I know him well; there needs no other motive
Than that most strange incontinence in crime
Which haunts this Oswald. Power is life to him
And breath and being; where he cannot govern,
He will destroy.

LACY

To have been trapped like moles!—
Yes, you are right, we need not hunt for motives:
There is no crime from which this man would shrink;
He recks not human law; and I have noticed

That often when the name of God is uttered,
A sudden blankness overspreads his face.

LENNOX

Yet, reasoner as he is, his pride has built
Some uncouth superstition of its own.

WALLACE

I have seen traces of it.

LENNOX

Once he headed
A band of Pirates in the Norway seas;
And when the King of Denmark summoned him
To the oath of fealty, I well remember,
'Twas a strange answer that he made; he said,
"I hold of Spirits, and the Sun in heaven."

LACY

He is no madman.

WALLACE

A most subtle doctor
Were that man, who could draw the line that parts
Pride and her daughter, Cruelty, from Madness,
That should be scourged, not pitied. Restless Minds,
Such Minds as find amid their fellow-men
No heart that loves them, none that they can love,
Will turn perforce and seek for sympathy
In dim relation to imagined Beings.

ONE OF THE BAND

What if he mean to offer up our Captain
An expiation and a sacrifice
To those infernal fiends!

WALLACE

Now, if the event
Should be as Lennox has foretold, then swear,

My Friends, his heart shall have as many wounds
As there are daggers here.

LACY

What need of swearing!

ONE OF THE BAND

Let us away!

ANOTHER

Away!

A THIRD

Hark! how the horns
Of those Scotch Rovers echo through the vale.

LACY

Stay you behind; and when the sun is down,
Light up this beacon.

ONE OF THE BAND

You shall be obeyed.
[*They go out together.*

SCENE—*The Wood on the edge of the Moor*

MARMADUKE (*alone*)

MARMADUKE

Deep, deep and vast, vast beyond human thought,
Yet calm.—I could believe, that there was here
The only quiet heart on earth. In terror,
Remembered terror, there is peace and rest.

Enter OSWALD

OSWALD

Ha! my dear Captain.

MARMADUKE

A later meeting, Oswald,
Would have been better timed.

OSWALD

Alone, I see;
You have done your duty. I had hopes, which now
I feel that you will justify.

MARMADUKE

I had fears,
From which I have freed myself—but 'tis my wish
To be alone, and therefore we must part.

OSWALD

Nay, then—I am mistaken. There's a weakness
About you still; you talk of solitude—
I am your friend.

MARMADUKE

What need of this assurance
At any time? and why given now?

OSWALD

Because
You are now in truth my Master; you have taught me
What there is not another living man
Had strength to teach;—and therefore gratitude
Is bold, and would relieve itself by praise.

MARMADUKE

Wherefore press this on me?

OSWALD

Because I feel
That you have shown, and by a signal instance,
How they who would be just must seek the rule
By diving for it into their own bosoms.
To-day you have thrown off a tyranny

That lives but in the torpid acquiescence
Of our emasculated souls, the tyranny
Of the world's masters, with the musty rules
By which they uphold their craft from age to age:
You have obeyed the only law that sense
Submits to recognise; the immediate law,
From the clear light of circumstances, flashed
Upon an independent Intellect.
Henceforth new prospects open on your path;
Your faculties should grow with the demand;
I still will be your friend, will cleave to you
Through good and evil, obloquy and scorn,
Oft as they dare to follow on your steps.

MARMADUKE

I would be left alone.

OSWALD (*exultingly*)

I know your motives!
I am not of the world's presumptuous judges,
Who damn where they can neither see nor feel,
With a hard-hearted ignorance; your struggles
I witness'd, and now hail your victory.

MARMADUKE

Spare me awhile that greeting.

OSWALD

It may be,
That some there are, squeamish half-thinking cowards,
Who will turn pale upon you, call you murderer,
And you will walk in solitude among them.
A mighty evil for a strong-built mind!—
Join twenty tapers of unequal height
And light them joined, and you will see the less
How 'twill burn down the taller; and they all
Shall prey upon the tallest. Solitude!—
The Eagle lives in Solitude!

MARMADUKE

Even so,
The Sparrow so on the house-top, and I,
The weakest of God's creatures, stand resolved
To abide the issue of my act, alone.

OSWALD

Now would you? and for ever?—My young Friend,
As time advances either we become
The prey or masters of our own past deeds.
Fellowship we *must* have, willing or no;
And if good Angels fail, slack in their duty,
Substitutes, turn our faces where we may,
Are still forthcoming; some which, though they bear
Ill names, can render no ill services,
In recompense for what themselves required.
So meet extremes in this mysterious world,
And opposites thus melt into each other.

MARMADUKE

Time, since Man first drew breath, has never moved
With such a weight upon his wings as now;
But they will soon be lightened.

OSWALD

Ay, look up—
Cast round you your mind's eye, and you will learn
Fortitude is the child of Enterprise:
Great actions move our admiration, chiefly
Because they carry in themselves an earnest
That we can suffer greatly.

MARMADUKE

Very true.

OSWALD

Action is transitory—a step, a blow,
The motion of a muscle—this way or that—

'Tis done, and in the after-vacancy
We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed:
Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,
And shares the nature of infinity.

MARMADUKE

Truth—and I feel it.

OSWALD

What! if you had bid
Eternal farewell to unmingled joy
And the light dancing of the thoughtless heart;
It is the toy of fools, and little fit
For such a world as this. The wise abjure
All thoughts whose idle composition lives
In the entire forgetfulness of pain.
—I see I have disturbed you.

MARMADUKE

By no means.

OSWALD

Compassion!—pity!—pride can do without them;
And what if you should never know them more!—
He is a puny soul who, feeling pain,
Finds ease because another feels it too.
If e'er I open out this heart of mine
It shall be for a nobler end—to teach
And not to purchase puling sympathy.
—Nay, you are pale.

MARMADUKE

It may be so.

OSWALD

Remorse—
It cannot live with thought; think on, think on,
And it will die. What! in this universe,
Where the least things control the greatest, where
The faintest breath that breathes can move a world;

What! feel remorse, where, if a cat had sneezed,
A leaf had fallen, the thing had never been
Whose very shadow gnaws us to the vitals.

MARMADUKE

Now, whither are you wandering? That a man
So used to suit his language to the time,
Should thus so widely differ from himself—
It is most strange.

OSWALD

Murder!—what's in the word!—
I have no cases by me ready made
To fit all deeds. Carry him to the Camp!—
A shallow project;—you of late have seen
More deeply, taught us that the institutes
Of Nature, by a cunning usurpation
Banished from human intercourse, exist
Only in our relations to the brutes
That make the fields their dwelling. If a snake
Crawl from beneath our feet we do not ask
A license to destroy him: our good governors
Hedge in the life of every pest and plague
That bears the shape of man; and for what purpose,
But to protect themselves from extirpation?—
This flimsy barrier you have overleaped.

MARMADUKE

My Office is fulfilled—the Man is now
Delivered to the Judge of all things.

OSWALD

Dead!

MARMADUKE

I have borne my burthen to its destined end.

OSWALD

This instant we'll return to our Companions—
Oh how I long to see their faces again!

Enter IDONEA *with* Pilgrims *who continue their journey*

IDONEA (*after some time*)

What, Marmaduke! now thou art mine for ever.
And Oswald, too! (*To* MARMADUKE.) On will we to my Father
With the glad tidings which this day hath brought;
We'll go together, and, such proof received
Of his own rights restored, his gratitude
To God above will make him feel for ours.

OSWALD

I interrupt you?

IDONEA

Think not so.

MARMADUKE

Idonea,
That I should ever live to see this moment!

IDONEA

Forgive me.—Oswald knows it all—he knows,
Each word of that unhappy letter fell
As a blood drop from my heart.

OSWALD

'Twas even so.

MARMADUKE

I have much to say, but for whose ear?—not thine.

IDONEA

Ill can I bear that look—Plead for me, Oswald!
You are my Father's Friend.
(*To* MARMADUKE.) Alas, you know not,
And never *can* you know, how much he loved me.
Twice had he been to me a father, twice
Had given me breath, and was I not to be
His daughter, once his daughter? could I withstand

His pleading face, and feel his clasping arms,
And hear his prayer that I would not forsake him
In his old age—— [*Hides her face.*

MARMADUKE

Patience—Heaven grant me patience!—
She weeps, she weeps—*my* brain shall burn for hours
Ere *I* can shed a tear.

IDONEA

I was a woman;
And, balancing the hopes that are the dearest
To womankind with duty to my Father,
I yielded up those precious hopes, which nought
On earth could else have wrested from me;—if erring,
Oh let me be forgiven!

MARMADUKE

I *do* forgive thee.

IDONEA

But take me to your arms—this breast, alas!
It throbs, and you have a heart that does not feel it.

MARMADUKE (*exultingly*)

She is innocent. [*He embraces her.*

OSWALD (*aside*)

Were I a Moralist,
I should make wondrous revolution here;
It were a quaint experiment to show
The beauty of truth— [*Addressing them.*
I see I interrupt you;
I shall have business with you, Marmaduke;
Follow me to the Hostel. [*Exit* OSWALD.

IDONEA

Marmaduke,
This is a happy day. My Father soon
Shall sun himself before his native doors;

The lame, the hungry, will be welcome there.
No more shall he complain of wasted strength,
Of thoughts that fail, and a decaying heart;
His good works will be balm and life to him.

MARMADUKE

This is most strange!—I know not what it was,
But there was something which most plainly said,
That thou wert innocent.

IDONEA

How innocent!—
Oh heavens! you've been deceived.

MARMADUKE

Thou art a Woman
To bring perdition on the universe.

IDONEA

Already I've been punished to the height
Of my offence. [*Smiling affectionately.*
I see you love me still,
The labours of my hand are still your joy;
Bethink you of the hour when on your shoulder
I hung this belt.
[*Pointing to the belt on which was suspended* HERBERT'S *scrip.*

MARMADUKE

Mercy of Heaven! [*Sinks.*

IDONEA

What ails you? [*Distractedly.*

MARMADUKE

The scrip that held his food, and I forgot
To give it back again!

IDONEA

What mean your words?

MARMADUKE

I know not what I said—all may be well.

IDONEA

That smile hath life in it!

MARMADUKE

This road is perilous;
I will attend you to a Hut that stands
Near the wood's edge—rest there to-night, I pray you:
For me, I have business, as you heard, with Oswald,
But will return to you by break of day. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV

SCENE—*A desolate prospect—a ridge of rocks—a Chapel on the summit of one—Moon behind the rocks—night stormy—irregular sound of a bell*—HERBERT *enters exhausted.*

HERBERT

That Chapel-bell in mercy seemed to guide me,
But now it mocks my steps; its fitful stroke
Can scarcely be the work of human hands.
Hear me, ye Men, upon the cliffs, if such
There be who pray nightly before the Altar.
Oh that I had but strength to reach the place!
My Child—my Child—dark—dark—I faint—this wind—
These stifling blasts—God help me!

Enter ELDRED

ELDRED

Better this bare rock,
Though it were tottering over a man's head,
Than a tight case of dungeon walls for shelter

From such rough dealing. [*A moaning voice is heard.*
Ha! what sound is that?
Trees creaking in the wind (but none are here)
Send forth such noises—and that weary bell!
Surely some evil Spirit abroad to-night
Is ringing it—'twould stop a Saint in prayer,
And that—what is it? never was sound so like
A human groan. Ha! what is here? Poor Man—
Murdered! alas! speak—speak, I am your friend:
No answer—hush—lost wretch, he lifts his hand
And lays it to his heart—(*Kneels to him.*) I pray you speak!
What has befallen you?

HERBERT (*feebly*)

A stranger has done this,
And in the arms of a stranger I must die.

ELDRED

Nay, think not so: come, let me raise you up:
[*Raises him.*
This is a dismal place—well—that is well—
I was too fearful—take me for your guide
And your support—my hut is not far off.
[*Draws him gently off the stage.*

SCENE—*A room in the Hostel*—MARMADUKE *and* OSWALD

MARMADUKE

But for Idonea!—I have cause to think
That she is innocent.

OSWALD

Leave that thought awhile,
As one of those beliefs which in their hearts
Lovers lock up as pearls, though oft no better
Than feathers clinging to their points of passion.

This day's event has laid on me the duty
Of opening out my story; you must hear it,
And without further preface.—In my youth,
Except for that abatement which is paid
By envy as a tribute to desert,
I was the pleasure of all hearts, the darling
Of every tongue—as you are now. You've heard
That I embarked for Syria. On our voyage
Was hatched among the crew a foul Conspiracy
Against my honour, in the which our Captain
Was, I believed, prime Agent. The wind fell;
We lay becalmed week after week, until
The water of the vessel was exhausted;
I felt a double fever in my veins,
Yet rage suppressed itself;—to a deep stillness
Did my pride tame my pride;—for many days,
On a dead sea under a burning sky,
I brooded o'er my injuries, deserted
By man and nature;—if a breeze had blown,
It might have found its way into my heart,
And I had been—no matter—do you mark me?

MARMADUKE

Quick—to the point—if any untold crime
Doth haunt your memory.

OSWALD

Patience, hear me further!—
One day in silence did we drift at noon
By a bare rock, narrow, and white, and bare;
No food was there, no drink, no grass, no shade,
No tree, nor jutting eminence, nor form
Inanimate large as the body of man,
Nor any living thing whose lot of life
Might stretch beyond the measure of one moon.
To dig for water on the spot, the Captain
Landed with a small troop, myself being one:
There I reproached him with his treachery.

Imperious at all times, his temper rose;
He struck me; and that instant had I killed him,
And put an end to his insolence, but my Comrades
Rushed in between us: then did I insist
(All hated him, and I was stung to madness)
That we should leave him there, alive!—we did so.

MARMADUKE

And he was famished?

OSWALD

Naked was the spot;
Methinks I see it now—how in the sun
Its stony surface glittered like a shield;
And in that miserable place we left him,
Alone but for a swarm of minute creatures
Not one of which could help him while alive,
Or mourn him dead.

MARMADUKE

A man by men cast off,
Left without burial! nay, not dead nor dying,
But standing, walking, stretching forth his arms,
In all things like ourselves, but in the agony
With which he called for mercy; and—even so—
He was forsaken?

OSWALD

There is a power in sounds:
The cries he uttered might have stopped the boat
That bore us through the water——

MARMADUKE

You returned
Upon that dismal hearing—did you not?

OSWALD

Some scoffed at him with hellish mockery,
And laughed so loud it seemed that the smooth sea
Did from some distant region echo us.

MARMADUKE

We all are of one blood, our veins are filled
At the same poisonous fountain!

OSWALD

'Twas an island
Only by sufferance of the winds and waves,
Which with their foam could cover it at will.
I know not how he perished; but the calm,
The same dead calm, continued many days.

MARMADUKE

But his own crime had brought on him this doom,
His wickedness prepared it; these expedients
Are terrible, yet ours is not the fault.

OSWALD

The man was famished, and was innocent!

MARMADUKE

Impossible!

OSWALD

The man had never wronged me.

MARMADUKE

Banish the thought, crush it, and be at peace.
His guilt was marked—these things could never be
Were there not eyes that see, and for good ends,
Where ours are baffled.

OSWALD

I had been deceived.

MARMADUKE

And from that hour the miserable man
No more was heard of?

OSWALD

I had been betrayed.

MARMADUKE

And he found no deliverance!

OSWALD

The Crew
Gave me a hearty welcome; they had laid
The plot to rid themselves, at any cost,
Of a tyrannic Master whom they loathed.
So we pursued our voyage: when we landed,
The tale was spread abroad; my power at once
Shrunk from me; plans and schemes, and lofty hopes—
All vanished. I gave way—do you attend?

MARMADUKE

The Crew deceived you?

OSWALD

Nay, command yourself.

MARMADUKE

It is a dismal night—how the wind howls!

OSWALD

I hid my head within a Convent, there
Lay passive as a dormouse in mid winter.
That was no life for me—I was o'erthrown
But not destroyed.

MARMADUKE

The proofs—you ought to have seen
The guilt—have touched it—felt it at your heart—
As I have done.

OSWALD

A fresh tide of Crusaders
Drove by the place of my retreat: three nights
Did constant meditation dry my blood;
Three sleepless nights I passed in sounding on,
Through words and things, a dim and perilous way;

And, wheresoe'er I turned me, I beheld
A slavery compared to which the dungeon
And clanking chains are perfect liberty.
You understand me—I was comforted;
I saw that every possible shape of action
Might lead to good—I saw it and burst forth
Thirsting for some of those exploits that fill
The earth for sure redemption of lost peace.
[*Marking* MARMADUKE'S *countenance.*
Nay, you have had the worst. Ferocity
Subsided in a moment, like a wind
That drops down dead out of a sky it vexed.
And yet I had within me evermore
A salient spring of energy; I mounted
From action up to action with a mind
That never rested—without meat or drink
Have I lived many days—my sleep was bound
To purposes of reason—not a dream
But had a continuity and substance
That waking life had never power to give.

MARMADUKE

O wretched Human-kind!—Until the mystery
Of all this world is solved, well may we envy
The worm, that, underneath a stone whose weight
Would crush the lion's paw with mortal anguish,
Doth lodge, and feed, and coil, and sleep, in safety.
Fell not the wrath of Heaven upon those traitors?

OSWALD

Give not to them a thought. From Palestine
We marched to Syria: oft I left the Camp,
When all that multitude of hearts was still,
And followed on, through woods of gloomy cedar,
Into deep chasms troubled by roaring streams;
Or from the top of Lebanon surveyed
The moonlight desert, and the moonlight sea:
In these my lonely wanderings I perceived

What mighty objects do impress their forms
To elevate our intellectual being;
And felt, if aught on earth deserves a curse,
'Tis that worst principle of ill which dooms
A thing so great to perish self-consumed.
—So much for my remorse!

MARMADUKE

Unhappy Man!

OSWALD

When from these forms I turned to contemplate
The World's opinions and her usages,
I seemed a Being who had passed alone
Into a region of futurity,
Whose natural element was freedom——

MARMADUKE

Stop—
I may not, cannot, follow thee.

OSWALD

You must.
I had been nourished by the sickly food
Of popular applause. I now perceived
That we are praised, only as men in us
Do recognise some image of themselves,
An abject counterpart of what they are,
Or the empty thing that they would wish to be.
I felt that merit has no surer test
Than obloquy; that, if we wish to serve
The world in substance, not deceive by show,
We must become obnoxious to its hate,
Or fear disguised in simulated scorn.

MARMADUKE

I pity, can forgive, you; but those wretches—
That monstrous perfidy!

OSWALD

Keep down your wrath.
False Shame discarded, spurious Fame despised,
Twin sisters both of Ignorance, I found
Life stretched before me smooth as some broad way
Cleared for a monarch's progress. Priests might spin
Their veil, but not for me—'twas in fit place
Among its kindred cobwebs. I had been,
And in that dream had left my native land,
One of Love's simple bondsmen—the soft chain
Was off for ever; and the men, from whom
This liberation came, you would destroy:
Join me in thanks for their blind services.

MARMADUKE

'Tis a strange aching that, when we would curse
And cannot.—You have betrayed me—I have done—
I am content—I know that he is guiltless—
That both are guiltless, without spot or stain,
Mutually consecrated. Poor old Man!
And I had heart for this, because thou lovedst
Her who from very infancy had been
Light to thy path, warmth to thy blood!—Together
[*Turning to* OSWALD.
We propped his steps, he leaned upon us both.

OSWALD

Ay, we are coupled by a chain of adamant;
Let us be fellow-labourers, then, to enlarge
Man's intellectual empire. We subsist
In slavery; all is slavery; we receive
Laws, but we ask not whence those laws have come;
We need an inward sting to goad us on.

MARMADUKE

Have you betrayed me? Speak to that.

OSWALD

The mask,
Which for a season I have stooped to wear,
Must be cast off.—Know then that I was urged,
(For other impulse let it pass) was driven,
To seek for sympathy, because I saw
In you a mirror of my youthful self;
I would have made us equal once again,
But that was a vain hope. You have struck home,
With a few drops of blood cut short the business;
Therein for ever you must yield to me.
But what is done will save you from the blank
Of living without knowledge that you live:
Now you are suffering—for the future day,
'Tis his who will command it.—Think of my story—
Herbert is *innocent.*

MARMADUKE (*in a faint voice, and doubtingly*)

You do but echo
My own wild words?

OSWALD

Young Man, the seed must lie
Hid in the earth, or there can be no harvest;
'Tis Nature's law. What I have done in darkness
I will avow before the face of day.
Herbert *is* innocent.

MARMADUKE

What fiend could prompt
This action? Innocent!—oh, breaking heart!—
Alive or dead, I'll find him. [*Exit.*

OSWALD

Alive—perdition! [*Exit.*

SCENE—*The inside of a poor Cottage*

ELEANOR *and* IDONEA *seated*

IDONEA

The storm beats hard—Mercy for poor or rich,
Whose heads are shelterless in such a night!

A VOICE WITHOUT

Holla! to bed, good Folks, within!

ELEANOR

O save us!

IDONEA

What can this mean?

ELEANOR

Alas, for my poor husband!—
We'll have a counting of our flocks to-morrow;
The wolf keeps festival these stormy nights:
Be calm, sweet Lady, they are wassailers
[*The voices die away in the distance.*
Returning from their Feast—my heart beats so—
A noise at midnight does *so* frighten me.

IDONEA

Hush! [*Listening.*

ELEANOR

They are gone. On such a night, my husband,
Dragged from his bed, was cast into a dungeon,
Where, hid from me, he counted many years,
A criminal in no one's eyes but theirs—
Not even in theirs—whose brutal violence
So dealt with him.

IDONEA

I have a noble Friend
First among youths of knightly breeding, One

Who lives but to protect the weak or injured.
There again! [*Listening.*

ELEANOR

'Tis my husband's foot. Good Eldred
Has a kind heart; but his imprisonment
Has made him fearful, and he'll never be
The man he was.

IDONEA

I will retire;—good night!
[*She goes within.*

Enter ELDRED (*hides a bundle*)

ELDRED

Not yet in bed, Eleanor!—there are stains in that frock which must be washed out.

ELEANOR

What has befallen you?

ELDRED

I am belated, and you must know the cause—(*speaking low*) that is the blood of an unhappy Man.

ELEANOR

Oh! we are undone for ever.

ELDRED

Heaven forbid that I should lift my hand against any man. Eleanor, I have shed tears to-night, and it comforts me to think of it.

ELEANOR

Where, where is he?

ELDRED

I have done him no harm, but——it will be forgiven me; it would not have been so once.

ELEANOR

You have not *buried* anything? You are no richer than when you left me?

ELDRED

Be at peace; I am innocent.

ELEANOR

Then God be thanked—

[*A short pause; she falls upon his neck.*

ELDRED

To-night I met with an old Man lying stretched upon the ground—a sad spectacle: I raised him up with a hope that we might shelter and restore him.

ELEANOR (*as if ready to run*)

Where is he? You were not able to bring him *all* the way with you; let us return, I can help you.

[ELDRED *shakes his head.*

ELDRED

He did not seem to wish for life: as I was struggling on, by the light of the moon I saw the stains of blood upon my clothes—he waved his hand, as if it were all useless; and I let him sink again to the ground.

ELEANOR

Oh that I had been by your side!

ELDRED

I tell you his hands and his body were cold—how could I disturb his last moments? he strove to turn from me as if he wished to settle into sleep.

ELEANOR

But, for the stains of blood—

ELDRED

He must have fallen, I fancy, for his head was cut; but I think his malady was cold and hunger.

ELEANOR

Oh, Eldred, I shall never be able to look up at this roof in storm or fair but I shall tremble.

ELDRED

Is it not enough that my ill stars have kept me abroad to-night till this hour? I come home, and this is my comfort!

ELEANOR

But did he say nothing which might have set you at ease?

ELDRED

I thought he grasped my hand while he was muttering something about his Child—his Daughter—(*starting as if he heard a noise*). What is that?

ELEANOR

Eldred, you are a father.

ELDRED

God knows what was in my heart, and will not curse my son for my sake.

ELEANOR

But you prayed by him? you waited the hour of his release?

ELDRED

The night was wasting fast; I have no friend; I am spited by the world—his wound terrified me—if I had brought him along with me, and he had died in my arms!——I am sure I heard something breathing—and this chair!

ELEANOR

Oh, Eldred, you will die alone. You will have nobody to close your eyes—no hand to grasp your dying hand—I shall be in my grave. A curse will attend us all.

ELDRED

Have you forgot your own troubles when I was in the dungeon?

ELEANOR

And you left him alive?

ELDRED

Alive!—the damps of death were upon him—he could not have survived an hour.

ELEANOR

In the cold, cold night.

ELDRED (*in a savage tone*)

Ay, and his head was bare; I suppose you would have had me lend my bonnet to cover it.—You will never rest till I am brought to a felon's end.

ELEANOR

Is there nothing to be done? cannot we go to the Convent?

ELDRED

Ay, and say at once that I murdered him!

ELEANOR

Eldred, I know that ours is the only house upon the Waste; let us take heart; this Man may be rich; and could he be saved by our means, his gratitude may reward us.

ELDRED

'Tis all in vain.

ELEANOR

But let us make the attempt. This old Man may have a wife, and he may have children—let us return to the spot; we may restore him, and his eyes may yet open upon those that love him.

ELDRED

He will never open them more; even when he spoke to me, he kept them firmly sealed as if he had been blind.

IDONEA (*rushing out*)

It is, it is, my Father—

ELDRED

We are betrayed (*looking at* IDONEA).

ELEANOR

His Daughter!—God have mercy! (*turning to* IDONEA)

IDONEA (*sinking down*)

Oh! lift me up and carry me to the place.
You are safe; the whole world shall not harm you.

ELEANOR

This Lady is his Daughter.

ELDRED (*moved*)

I'll lead you to the spot.

IDONEA (*springing up*)

Alive!—you heard him breathe? quick, quick—

[*Exeunt.*

ACT V

SCENE—*A wood on the edge of the Waste*

Enter OSWALD *and a* Forester

FORESTER

He leaned upon the bridge that spans the glen,
And down into the bottom cast his eye,
That fastened there, as it would check the current.

OSWALD

He listened too; did you not say he listened?

FORESTER

As if there came such moaning from the flood
As is heard often after stormy nights.

OSWALD

But did he utter nothing?

FORESTER

See him there!

MARMADUKE *appearing*

MARMADUKE

Buzz, buzz, ye black and winged freebooters;
That is no substance which ye settle on!

FORESTER

His senses play him false; and see, his arms
Outspread, as if to save himself from falling!—
Some terrible phantom I believe is now
Passing before him, such as God will not
Permit to visit any but a man
Who has been guilty of some horrid crime.

[MARMADUKE *disappears.*

OSWALD

The game is up!—

FORESTER

If it be needful, Sir,
I will assist you to lay hands upon him.

OSWALD

No, no, my Friend, you may pursue your business—
'Tis a poor wretch of an unsettled mind,
Who has a trick of straying from his keepers;
We must be gentle. Leave him to my care.

[*Exit* Forester.

If his own eyes play false with him, these freaks
Of fancy shall be quickly tamed by mine;
The goal is reached. My Master shall become
A shadow of myself—made by myself.

SCENE—*The edge of the Moor*

MARMADUKE *and* ELDRED *enter from opposite sides*

MARMADUKE (*raising his eyes and perceiving* ELDRED)

In any corner of this savage Waste,
Have you, good Peasant, seen a blind old Man?

ELDRED

I heard——

MARMADUKE

You heard him, where? when heard him?

ELDRED

As you know
The first hours of last night were rough with storm:
I had been out in search of a stray heifer;
Returning late, I heard a moaning sound;
Then, thinking that my fancy had deceived me,
I hurried on, when straight a second moan,

A human voice distinct, struck on my ear.
So guided, distant a few steps, I found
An aged Man, and such as you describe.

MARMADUKE

You heard!—he called you to him? Of all men
The best and kindest!—but where is he? guide me,
That I may see him.

ELDRED

On a ridge of rocks
A lonesome Chapel stands, deserted now:
The bell is left, which no one dares remove;
And, when the stormy wind blows o'er the peak,
It rings, as if a human hand were there
To pull the cord. I guess he must have heard it;
And it had led him towards the precipice,
To climb up to the spot whence the sound came;
But he had failed through weakness. From his hand
His staff had dropped, and close upon the brink
Of a small pool of water he was laid,
As if he had stooped to drink, and so remained
Without the strength to rise.

MARMADUKE

Well, well, he lives,
And all is safe: what said he?

ELDRED

But few words:
He only spake to me of a dear Daughter,
Who, so he feared, would never see him more;
And of a Stranger to him, One by whom
He had been sore misused; but he forgave
The wrong and the wrong-doer. You are troubled—
Perhaps you are his son?

MARMADUKE

The All-seeing knows,
I did not think he had a living Child.—
But whither did you carry him ?

ELDRED

He was torn,
His head was bruised, and there was blood about him——

MARMADUKE

That was no work of mine.

ELDRED

Nor was it mine.

MARMADUKE

But had he strength to walk ? I could have borne him
A thousand miles.

ELDRED

I am in poverty,
And know how busy are the tongues of men ;
My heart was willing, Sir, but I am one
Whose good deeds will not stand by their own light ;
And, though it smote me more than words can tell,
I left him.

MARMADUKE

I believe that there are phantoms,
That in the shape of man do cross our path
On evil instigation, to make sport
Of our distress—and thou art one of them !
But things substantial have so pressed on me——

ELDRED

My wife and children came into my mind.

MARMADUKE

Oh Monster ! Monster ! there are three of us,

And we shall howl together.

[*After a pause and in a feeble voice.*

I am deserted
At my worst need, my crimes have in a net
(*Pointing to* ELDRED) Entangled this poor man.—
Where was it? where?

[*Dragging him along.*

ELDRED

'Tis needless; spare your violence. His Daughter——

MARMADUKE

Ay, in the word a thousand scorpions lodge:
This old man *had* a Daughter.

ELDRED

To the spot
I hurried back with her.—Oh save me, Sir,
From such a journey!——there was a black tree,
A single tree; she thought it was her Father.—
Oh Sir, I would not see that hour again
For twenty lives. The daylight dawned, and now—
Nay; hear my tale, 'tis fit that you should hear it—
As we approached, a solitary crow
Rose from the spot;—the Daughter clapped her hands,
And then I heard a shriek so terrible

[MARMADUKE *shrinks back.*

The startled bird quivered upon the wing.

MARMADUKE

Dead, dead!—

ELDRED (*after a pause*)

A dismal matter, Sir, for me,
And seems the like for you; if 'tis your wish,
I'll lead you to his Daughter; but 'twere best
That she should be prepared; I'll go before.

MARMADUKE

There will be need of preparation.

[ELDRED *goes off.*

ELEANOR (*enters*)

Master!
Your limbs sink under you, shall I support you?

MARMADUKE (*taking her arm*)

Woman, I've lent my body to the service
Which now thou tak'st upon thee. God forbid
That thou shouldst ever meet a like occasion
With such a purpose in thine heart as mine was.

ELEANOR

Oh, why have I to do with things like these?

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE *changes to the door of* ELDRED'S *cottage*—IDONEA *seated—enter* ELDRED

ELDRED

Your Father, Lady, from a wilful hand
Has met unkindness; so indeed he told me,
And you remember such was my report:
From what has just befallen me I have cause
To fear the very worst.

IDONEA

My Father is dead;
Why dost thou come to me with words like these?

ELDRED

A wicked Man should answer for his crimes.

IDONEA

Thou seest me what I am.

ELDRED

It was most heinous,
And doth call out for vengeance.

IDONEA

Do not add,
I prith'ee, to the harm thou'st done already.

ELDRED

Hereafter you will thank me for this service.
Hard by, a Man I met, who, from plain proofs
Of interfering Heaven, I have no doubt,
Laid hands upon your Father. Fit it were
You should prepare to meet him.

IDONEA

I have nothing
To do with others; help me to my Father—

[*She turns and sees* MARMADUKE *leaning on* ELEANOR—*throws herself upon his neck, and after some time*,

In joy I met thee, but a few hours past;
And thus we meet again; one human stay
Is left me still in thee. Nay, shake not so.

MARMADUKE

In such a wilderness—to see no thing,
No, not the pitying moon!

IDONEA

And perish so.

MARMADUKE

Without a dog to moan for him.

IDONEA

Think not of it,
But enter there and see him how he sleeps,
Tranquil as he had died in his own bed.

MARMADUKE

Tranquil—why not?

IDONEA

Oh, peace!

MARMADUKE

He is at peace;
His body is at rest: there was a plot,
A hideous plot, against the soul of man:
It took effect—and yet I baffled it,
In *some* degree.

IDONEA

Between us stood, I thought,
A cup of consolation, filled from Heaven
For both our needs; must I, and in thy presence,
Alone partake of it?—Beloved Marmaduke!

MARMADUKE

Give me a reason why the wisest thing
That the earth owns shall never choose to die,
But some one must be near to count his groans.
The wounded deer retires to solitude,
And dies in solitude: all things but man,
All die in solitude.

[*Moving towards the cottage door.*

Mysterious God,
If she had never lived I had not done it!—

IDONEA

Alas! the thought of such a cruel death
Has overwhelmed him.—I must follow.

ELDRED

Lady!
You will do well; (*she goes*) unjust suspicion may
Cleave to this Stranger: if, upon his entering,
The dead Man heave a groan, or from his side
Uplift his hand—that would be evidence.

ELEANOR

Shame! Eldred, shame!

MARMADUKE (*both returning*)

The dead have but one face. (*To himself.*)
And such a Man—so meek and unoffending—
Helpless and harmless as a babe: a Man,
By obvious signal to the world's protection,
Solemnly dedicated—to decoy him!—

IDONEA

Oh, had you seen him living!—

MARMADUKE

I (so filled
With horror is this world) am unto thee
The thing most precious, that it now contains:
Therefore through me alone must be revealed
By whom thy Parent was destroyed, Idonea!
I have the proofs!—

IDONEA

O miserable Father!
Thou didst command me to bless all mankind;
Nor to this moment, have I ever wished
Evil to any living thing; but hear me,
Hear me, ye Heavens!—(*kneeling*)—may vengeance haunt the fiend
For this most cruel murder: let him live
And move in terror of the elements;
The thunder send him on his knees to prayer
In the open streets, and let him think he sees,
If e'er he entereth the house of God,
The roof, self-moved, unsettling o'er his head;
And let him, when he would lie down at night,
Point to his wife the blood-drops on his pillow!

MARMADUKE

My voice was silent, but my heart hath joined thee.

IDONEA (*leaning on* MARMADUKE)

Left to the mercy of that savage Man!
How could he call upon his Child!—O Friend!
[*Turns to* MARMADUKE.
My faithful true and only Comforter.

MARMADUKE

Ay, come to me and weep. (*He kisses her.*) (*To* ELDRED.) Yes, Varlet, look,
The devils at such sights do clap their hands.
[ELDRED *retires alarmed.*

IDONEA

Thy vest is torn, thy cheek is deadly pale;
Hast thou pursued the monster?

MARMADUKE

I have found him.—
Oh! would that thou hadst perished in the flames!

IDONEA

Here art thou, then can I be desolate?—

MARMADUKE

There was a time, when this protecting hand
Availed against the mighty; never more
Shall blessings wait upon a deed of mine.

IDONEA

Wild words for me to hear, for me, an orphan,
Committed to thy guardianship by Heaven;
And, if thou hast forgiven me, let me hope,
In this deep sorrow, trust, that I am thine
For closer care;—here, is no malady.
[*Taking his arm.*

MARMADUKE

There, *is* a malady—
(*Striking his heart and forehead.*) And here, and here,
A mortal malady.—I am accurst:
All nature curses me, and in my heart
Thy curse is fixed; the truth must be laid bare.
It must be told, and borne. I am the man,
(Abused, betrayed, but how it matters not)
Presumptuous above all that ever breathed,
Who, casting as I thought a guilty Person
Upon Heaven's righteous judgment, did become
An instrument of Fiends. Through me, through me,
Thy Father perished.

IDONEA

Perished—by what mischance?

MARMADUKE

Belovèd!—if I dared, so would I call thee—
Conflict must cease, and, in thy frozen heart,
The extremes of suffering meet in absolute peace.
[*He gives her a letter.*

IDONEA (*reads*)

"Be not surprised if you hear that some signal judgment has befallen the man who calls himself your father; he is now with me, as his signature will shew: abstain from conjecture till you see me.

"HERBERT.
"MARMADUKE."

The writing Oswald's; the signature my Father's:
(*Looks steadily at the paper.*) And here is yours,—or do my eyes deceive me?
You have then seen my Father?

MARMADUKE

He has leaned
Upon this arm.

IDONEA

You led him towards the Convent?

MARMADUKE

That Convent was Stone-Arthur Castle. Thither
We were his guides. I on that night resolved
That he should wait thy coming till the day
Of resurrection.

IDONEA

Miserable Woman,
Too quickly moved, too easily giving way,
I put denial on thy suit, and hence,
With the disastrous issue of last night,
Thy perturbation, and these frantic words.
Be calm, I pray thee!

MARMADUKE

Oswald——

IDONEA

Name him not.

Enter Female Beggar

BEGGAR

And he is dead!—that Moor—how shall I cross it?
By night, by day, never shall I be able
To travel half a mile alone.—Good Lady!
Forgive me!—Saints forgive me. Had I thought
It would have come to this!—

IDONEA

What brings you hither? speak!

BEGGAR (*pointing to* MARMADUKE)

This innocent Gentleman. Sweet heavens! I told him
Such tales of your dead Father!—God is my judge,
I thought there was no harm: but that bad Man,

He bribed me with his gold, and looked so fierce.
Mercy! I said I know not what—oh pity me—
I said, sweet Lady, you were not his Daughter—
Pity me, I am haunted;—thrice this day
My conscience made me wish to be struck blind;
And then I would have prayed, and had no voice.

IDONEA (*to* MARMADUKE)

Was it my Father?—no, no, no, for he
Was meek and patient, feeble, old and blind,
Helpless, and loved me dearer than his life
—But hear me. For *one* question, I have a heart
That will sustain me. Did you murder him?

MARMADUKE

No, not by stroke of arm. But learn the process:
Proof after proof was pressed upon me; guilt
Made evident, as seemed, by blacker guilt,
Whose impious folds enwrapped even thee; and truth
And innocence, embodied in his looks,
His words and tones and gestures, did but serve
With me to aggravate his crimes, and heaped
Ruin upon the cause for which they pleaded.
Then pity crossed the path of my resolve:
Confounded, I looked up to Heaven, and cast,
Idonea! thy blind Father, on the Ordeal
Of the bleak Waste—left him—and so he died!—

[IDONEA *sinks senseless;* Beggar, ELEANOR, etc., *crowd round, and bear her off.*

Why may we speak these things, and do no more;
Why should a thrust of the arm have such a power,
And words that tell these things be heard in vain?
She is not dead. Why!—if I loved this Woman,
I would take care she never woke again;
But she WILL wake, and she will weep for me,
And say, no blame was mine—and so, poor fool,
Will waste her curses on another name.

[*He walks about distractedly.*

Enter OSWALD

OSWALD (*to himself*)

Strong to o'erturn, strong also to build up.
[*To* MARMADUKE.
The starts and sallies of our last encounter
Were natural enough: but that, I trust,
Is all gone by. You have cast off the chains
That fettered your nobility of mind—
Delivered heart and head!
Let us to Palestine;
This is a paltry field for enterprise.

MARMADUKE

Ay, what shall we encounter next? This issue—
'Twas nothing more than darkness deepening darkness,
And weakness crowned with the impotence of death!—
Your pupil is, you see, an apt proficient. (*ironically*)
Start not!—Here is another face hard by;
Come, let us take a peep at both together,
And, with a voice at which the dead will quake,
Resound the praise of your morality—
Of this too much.
[*Drawing* OSWALD *towards the Cottage—stops short at the door.*
Men are there, millions, Oswald,
Who with bare hands would have plucked out thy heart
And flung it to the dogs: but I am raised
Above, or sunk below, all further sense
Of provocation. Leave me, with the weight
Of that old Man's forgiveness on thy heart,
Pressing as heavily as it doth on mine.
Coward I have been; know, there lies not now
Within the compass of a mortal thought,
A deed that I would shrink from;—but to endure,
That is my destiny. May it be thine:
Thy office, thy ambition, be henceforth
To feed remorse, to welcome every sting

Of penitential anguish, yea with tears.
When seas and continents shall lie between us—
The wider space the better—we may find
In such a course fit links of sympathy,
An incommunicable rivalship
Maintained, for peaceful ends beyond our view.
[*Confused voices—several of the Band enter—rush upon* OSWALD *and seize him.*

ONE OF THEM

I would have dogged him to the jaws of hell—

OSWALD

Ha! is it so!—That vagrant Hag!—this comes
Of having left a thing like her alive! [*Aside.*

SEVERAL VOICES

Despatch him!

OSWALD

If I pass beneath a rock
And shout, and, with the echo of my voice,
Bring down a heap of rubbish, and it crush me,
I die without dishonour. Famished, starved,
A Fool and Coward blended to my wish!
[*Smiles scornfully and exultingly at* MARMADUKE.

WALLACE

'Tis done! (*Stabs him.*)

ANOTHER OF THE BAND

The ruthless traitor!

MARMADUKE

A rash deed!—
With that reproof I do resign a station
Of which I have been proud.

WILFRED (*approaching* MARMADUKE)

O my poor Master!

MARMADUKE

Discerning Monitor, my faithful Wilfred,
Why art thou here? [*Turning to* WALLACE.
Wallace, upon these Borders,
Many there be whose eyes will not want cause
To weep that I am gone. Brothers in arms!
Raise on that dreary Waste a monument
That may record my story: nor let words—
Few must they be, and delicate in their touch
As light itself—be there withheld from Her
Who, through most wicked arts, was made an orphan
By One who would have died a thousand times,
To shield her from a moment's harm. To you,
Wallace and Wilfred, I commend the Lady,
By lowly nature reared, as if to make her
In all things worthier of that noble birth,
Whose long-suspended rights are now on the eve
Of restoration: with your tenderest care
Watch over her, I pray—sustain her——

SEVERAL OF THE BAND (*eagerly*)

Captain!

MARMADUKE

No more of that; in silence hear my doom:
A hermitage has furnished fit relief
To some offenders; other penitents,
Less patient in their wretchedness, have fallen,
Like the old Roman, on their own sword's point.
They had their choice: a wanderer *must I* go,
The Spectre of that innocent Man, my guide.
No human ear shall ever hear me speak;
No human dwelling ever give me food,
Or sleep, or rest: but, over waste and wild,

In search of nothing, that this earth can give,
But expiation, will I wander on—
A Man by pain and thought compelled to live,
Yet loathing life—till anger is appeased
In Heaven, and Mercy gives me leave to die.

In June 1797 Coleridge wrote to his friend Cottle: "W. has written a tragedy himself. I speak with heart-felt sincerity, and, I think, unblinded judgment, when I tell you that I feel myself a little man by his side, and yet I do not think myself a less man than I formerly thought myself. His drama is absolutely wonderful. You know I do not commonly speak in such abrupt and unmingled phrases, and therefore will the more readily believe me. There are in the piece those profound touches of the human heart which I find three or four times in the *Robbers* of Schiller, and often in Shakspeare; but in W. there are no inequalities."

On August 6, 1800, Charles Lamb wrote to Coleridge: "I would pay five-and-forty thousand carriages to read W.'s tragedy, of which I have heard so much and seen so little." Shortly afterwards, August 26, he wrote to Coleridge: "I have a sort of a recollection that somebody, I think *you*, promised me a sight of Wordsworth's tragedy. I shall be very glad of it just now, for I have got Manning with me, and should like to read it *with him*. But this, I confess, is a refinement. Under any circumstances, alone, in Cold-Bath Prison, or in the desert island, just when Prospero and his crew had set off, with Caliban in a cage, to Milan, it would be a treat to me to read that play. Manning has read it, so has Lloyd, and all Lloyd's family; but I could not get him to betray his trust by giving me a sight of it. Lloyd is sadly deficient in some of those virtuous vices."—ED.

THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN

Composed 1797.—Published 1800

[Written 1801 or 1802. This arose out of my observations of the affecting music of these birds, hanging in this way in the London streets during the freshness and stillness of the spring morning.—I. F.]

Placed by Wordsworth among his "Poems of the Imagination."—ED.

The preceding Fenwick note to this poem is manifestly inaccurate as to date, since the poem is printed in the "Lyrical Ballads" of 1800. In the edition of 1836 the date of composition is given as 1797, and this date is followed by Mr. Carter, the editor of 1857. Miss Wordsworth's Journal gives no date; and, as the Fenwick note is certainly incorrect—and the poem must have been written before the edition of 1800 came out—it seems best to trust to the date sanctioned by Wordsworth himself in 1836, and followed by his literary executor in 1857. I think it probable that the poem was written during the short visit which Wordsworth and his sister paid to their brother Richard in London in 1797, when he tried to get his tragedy, *The Borderers*, brought on the stage. The title of the poem from 1800 to 1805 was *Poor Susan.*—ED.

AT the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears,
Hangs a Thrush[1] that sings loud, it has sung for three years:
Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and has heard
In the silence of morning the song of the Bird.

'Tis a note of enchantment; what ails her? She sees
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees;
Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

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[1] 1820.
There's a Thrush . . . . . . 1800.

Green pastures she views * in the midst of the dale,
Down which she so often has tripped with her pail;
And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The one only [1] dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven: but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade:
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colours have all passed away from her eyes! [2]

1798

A NIGHT PIECE

Composed 1798.—Published 1815

[Composed on the road between Nether Stowey and Alfoxden, extempore. I distinctly recollect the very moment when I was struck, as described,—'He looks up, the clouds are split,' etc.—I. F.]

Classed by Wordsworth among his "Poems of the Imagination."—ED.

——THE sky is overcast
With a continuous cloud of texture close,
Heavy and wan, all whitened by the Moon,
Which through that veil is indistinctly seen,

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1 1802.

The only one . . . . . . 1800.

2 The following stanza, in the edition of 1800, was omitted in subsequent ones:—

Poor Outcast! return—to receive thee once more
The house of thy Father will open its door,
And thou once again, in thy plain russet gown,
May'st hear the thrush sing from a tree of its own.†

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* Wordsworth originally wrote "sees." S. T. C. suggested "views."—ED.

† "Susan stood for the representative of poor '*Rus in urbe.*' There was quite enough to stamp the moral of the thing never to be forgotten; 'bright volumes of vapour,' etc. The last verse of Susan was to be got rid of, at all events. It threw a kind of dubiety upon Susan's moral conduct. Susan is a servant maid. I see her trundling her mop, and contemplating the whirling phenomenon through blurred optics; but to term her 'a poor outcast' seems as much as to say that poor Susan was no better than she should be, which I trust was not what you meant to express."—Charles Lamb to Wordsworth. See *The Letters of Charles Lamb*, edited by Alfred Ainger, vol. i., p. 287.—ED.

A dull, contracted circle, yielding light
So feebly spread, that not a shadow falls,
Chequering the ground—from rock, plant, tree, or tower.
At length a pleasant instantaneous gleam
Startles the pensive traveller while[1] he treads
His lonesome path, with unobserving eye
Bent earthwards; he looks up—the clouds are split
Asunder,—and above his head he sees
The clear Moon, and the glory of the heavens.
There, in a black-blue vault she sails along,
Followed by multitudes of stars, that, small
And sharp, and bright,* along the dark abyss
Drive as she drives: how fast they wheel away,
Yet vanish not!—the wind is in the tree,
But they are silent;—still they roll along
Immeasurably distant; and the vault,
Built round by those white clouds, enormous clouds,
Still deepens its unfathomable depth.
At length the Vision closes; and the mind,
Not undisturbed by the delight it feels,
Which slowly settles into peaceful calm,
Is left to muse upon the solemn scene.

* The indebtedness of the Poet to his Sister is nowhere more conspicuous than in this Poem. In Dorothy Wordsworth's Alfoxden Journal the following occurs, under date 25th January 1798: "Went to Poole's after tea. The sky spread over with one continuous cloud, whitened by the light of the moon, which, though her dim shape was seen, did not throw forth so strong a light as to chequer the earth with shadows. At once the clouds seemed to cleave asunder, and lift her in the centre of a black-blue vault. She sailed along, followed by multitudes of stars, small, and bright, and sharp; their brightness seemed concentrated."—Ed.

WE ARE SEVEN

Composed 1798.—Published 1798

[Written at Alfoxden in the spring of 1798, under circumstances somewhat remarkable. The little girl who is the heroine, I met within the area of Goodrich Castle in the year 1793. Having left the Isle of Wight, and crost Salisbury Plain, as

[1] 1827 . . . . as . . 1815.

mentioned in the preface to *Guilt and Sorrow*, I proceeded by Bristol up the Wye, and so on to N. Wales to the Vale of Clwydd, where I spent my summer under the roof of the father of my friend, Robert Jones.

In reference to this poem, I will here mention one of the most remarkable facts in my own poetic history, and that of Mr. Coleridge. In the spring of the year 1798, he, my sister, and myself, started from Alfoxden pretty late in the afternoon, with a view to visit Linton and the Valley of Stones near it; and as our united funds were very small, we agreed to defray the expense of the tour by writing a poem, to be sent to the *New Monthly Magazine*, set up by Philips, the bookseller, and edited by Dr. Aikin. Accordingly we set off, and proceeded along the Quantock Hills, towards Watchet; and in the course of this walk was planned the poem of *The Ancient Mariner*, founded on a dream, as Mr. Coleridge said, of his friend Mr. Cruikshank. Much the greatest part of the story was Mr. Coleridge's invention; but certain parts I myself suggested: for example, some crime was to be committed which should bring upon the Old Navigator, as Coleridge afterwards delighted to call him, the spectral persecution, as a consequence of that crime, and his own wanderings. I had been reading in Shelvocke's *Voyages*, a day or two before, that, while doubling Cape Horn, they frequently saw albatrosses in that latitude, the largest sort of sea-fowl, some extending their wings twelve or thirteen feet. 'Suppose,' said I, 'you represent him as having killed one of these birds on entering the South Sea, and that the tutelary spirits of these regions take upon them to avenge the crime.' The incident was thought fit for the purpose, and adopted accordingly. I also suggested the navigation of the ship by the dead men, but do not recollect that I had anything more to do with the scheme of the poem. The gloss with which it was subsequently accompanied was not thought of by either of us at the time; at least not a hint of it was given to me, and I have no doubt it was a gratuitous after-thought. We began the composition together, on that to me memorable evening: I furnished two or three lines at the beginning of the poem, in particular—

> And listen'd like a three years' child;
> The Mariner had his will.

These trifling contributions, all but one (which Mr. C. has with unnecessary scrupulosity recorded), slipt out of his mind, as well they might. As we endeavoured to proceed conjointly (I

speak of the same evening), our respective manners proved so widely different, that it would have been quite presumptuous in me to do anything but separate from an undertaking upon which I could only have been a clog. We returned after a few days from a delightful tour, of which I have many pleasant, and some of them droll enough, recollections. We returned by Dulverton to Alfoxden. *The Ancient Mariner* grew and grew till it became too important for our first object, which was limited to our expectation of five pounds; and we began to talk of a volume which was to consist, as Mr. Coleridge has told the world, of Poems chiefly on natural subjects taken from common life, but looked at, as much as might be, through an imaginative medium. Accordingly I wrote *The Idiot Boy*, *Her eyes are wild*, etc., *We are Seven*, *The Thorn*, and some others. To return to *We are Seven*, the piece that called forth this note, I composed it while walking in the grove at Alfoxden. My friends will not deem it too trifling to relate, that while walking to and fro I composed the last stanza first, having begun with the last line. When it was all but finished, I came in and recited it to Mr. Coleridge and my sister, and said, "A prefatory stanza must be added, and I should sit down to our little tea-meal with greater pleasure if my task was finished.' I mentioned in substance what I wished to be expressed, and Coleridge immediately threw off the stanza, thus;

A little child, dear brother Jem,

I objected to the rhyme, 'dear brother Jem,' as being ludicrous; but we all enjoyed the joke of hitching in our friend James Tobin's name, who was familiarly called Jem. He was the brother of the dramatist; and this reminds me of an anecdote which it may be worth while here to notice. The said Jem got a sight of the "Lyrical Ballads" as it was going through the press at Bristol, during which time I was residing in that city. One evening he came to me with a grave face, and said, "Wordsworth, I have seen the volume that Coleridge and you are about to publish. There is one poem in it which I earnestly entreat you will cancel, for, if published, it will make you everlastingly ridiculous." I answered, that I felt much obliged by the interest he took in my good name as a writer, and begged to know what was the unfortunate piece he alluded to. He said, 'It is called *We are Seven.*' 'Nay,' said I, 'that shall take its chance, however'; and he left me in despair. I have only to add, that in the spring* of 1841, I

* It was in June, after leaving Alfoxden finally.—Ed.

revisited Goodrich Castle, not having seen that part of the Wye since I met the little girl there in 1793. It would have given me greater pleasure to have found in the neighbouring hamlet traces of one who had interested me so much, but that was impossible, as unfortunately I did not even know her name. The ruin, from its position and features, is a most impressive object. I could not but deeply regret that its solemnity was impaired by a fantastic new Castle set up on a projection of the same ridge, as if to show how far modern art can go in surpassing all that could be done by antiquity and nature with their united graces, remembrances, and associations. I could have almost wished for power, so much the contrast vexed me, to blow away Sir —— Meyrick's impertinent structure and all the fopperies it contains.—I. F.]

The "structure" referred to is Goodrich Court, built in 1828 by Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick—a collector of ancient armour, and a great authority on the subject—mainly to receive his extensive private collection. The armour has been removed from Goodrich to the South Kensington Museum. *We are Seven* was placed by Wordsworth among his "Poems referring to the Period of Childhood."—Ed.

——A simple Child,[1]
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death? *

I met a little cottage Girl:
She was eight years old, she said;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad:
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
—Her beauty made me glad.

[1] 1815.
A simple child, dear brother Jim, 1798.

* The whole of this stanza was written by Coleridge. In a MS. copy of the poem, transcribed by him, after 1806, Wordsworth gave it the title *We are Seven, or Death*, but afterwards restored the original title.—Ed.

"Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
How many may you be?"
"How many? Seven in all," she said,
And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they? I pray you tell."
She answered, "Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

"Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye[1] are seven! I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be."

Then did the little Maid reply,
"Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree."

"You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church-yard laid,
Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be seen,"
The little Maid replied,
"Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
And they are side by side.

"My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;

[1] 1815.
. you . . . . 1798.

And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.[1]

"And often after sun-set, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

"The first that died was sister Jane;[2]
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.

"So in the church-yard she was laid;
And, when the grass was dry,[3]
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

"And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side."

"How many are you, then," said I,
"If they two are in heaven?"
Quick was the little Maid's reply,[4]
"O Master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!"
'Twas throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

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[1] 1836.
I sit and sing to them. 1798.

[2] 1836.
. . . . . little Jane; 1798.

[3] 1827.
And all the summer dry, 1798.

[4] 1836.
The little Maiden did reply, 1798.

ANECDOTE FOR FATHERS

Composed 1798.—Published 1798

'Retine vim istam, falsa enim dicam, si coges.'—EUSEBIUS.*

[This was suggested in front of Alfoxden. The boy was a son of my friend, Basil Montagu, who had been two or three years under our care. The name of Kilve is from a village on the Bristol Channel, about a mile from Alfoxden; and the name of Liswyn Farm was taken from a beautiful spot on the Wye, where Mr. Coleridge, my sister, and I had been visiting the famous John Thelwall, who had taken refuge from politics, after a trial for high treason, with a view to bring up his family by the profits of agriculture, which proved as unfortunate a speculation as that he had fled from. Coleridge and he had both been public lecturers; Coleridge mingling, with his politics, Theology, from which the other elocutionist abstained, unless it was for the sake of a sneer. This quondam community of public employment induced Thelwall to visit Coleridge at Nether Stowey, where he fell in my way. He really was a man of extraordinary talent, an affectionate husband, and a good father. Though brought up in the city, on a tailor's board, he was truly sensible of the beauty of natural objects. I remember once, when Coleridge, he, and I were seated together upon the turf, on the brink of a stream in the most beautiful part of the most beautiful glen of Alfoxden, Coleridge exclaimed, 'This is a place to reconcile one to all the jarrings and conflicts of the wide world.' 'Nay,' said Thelwall, 'to make one forget them altogether.' The visit of this man to Coleridge was, as I believe Coleridge has related, the occasion of a spy being sent by Government to watch our proceedings; which were, I can say with truth, such as the world at large would have thought ludicrously harmless.—I. F.]

In the editions 1798 to 1843 the title of this poem is *Anecdote for Fathers, showing how the practice*[1] *of lying may be taught.* It was placed among the "Poems referring to the Period of Childhood."—ED.

I HAVE a boy of five years old;
His face is fair and fresh to see;

[1] 1800.
the art . . . 1798.

* See Appendix IV.—ED.

His limbs are cast in beauty's mould,
And dearly he loves me.

One morn we strolled on our dry walk,
Our quiet home [1] all full in view,
And held such intermitted talk
As we are wont to do.

My thoughts on former pleasures ran;
I thought of Kilve's delightful shore,
Our [2] pleasant home when spring began,
A long, long year before.

A day it was when I could bear
Some fond regrets to entertain; [3]
With so much happiness to spare,
I could not feel a pain.

The green earth echoed to the feet
Of lambs that bounded through the glade,
From shade to sunshine, and as fleet
From sunshine back to shade.[4]

Birds warbled round me—and each trace
Of inward sadness had its charm;
Kilve, thought I, was a favoured place,[5]
And so is Liswyn farm.

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[1] 1802.
. . house . . . . . 1798.

[2] 1802.
My . . . . 1798.

[3] 1827.
To think, and think, and think again; 1798.

[4] 1827.
The young lambs ran a pretty race;
The morning sun shone bright and warm;
"Kilve," said I, "was a pleasant place,
"And so is Liswyn farm." 1798.

[5] 1836.
. . . . . . —every trace
Of inward sadness had its charm;
"Kilve," said I, ... 1827.
This verse was introduced in 1827.

My boy beside me tripped, so slim
And graceful in his rustic dress!
And, as we talked, I questioned him,[1]
In very idleness.

"Now tell me, had you rather be,"
I said, and took him by the arm,
"On Kilve's smooth shore, by the green sea,
Or here at Liswyn farm?"[2]

In careless mood he looked at me,
While still I held him by the arm,
And said, "At Kilve I'd rather be
Than here at Liswyn farm."

"Now, little Edward, say why so:
My little Edward, tell me why."—
"I cannot tell, I do not know."—
"Why, this is strange," said I;

"For, here are woods, hills smooth and warm:[3]
There surely must some reason be

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[1] 1836.
My boy was by my side, so slim
And graceful in his rustic dress!
And oftentimes I talked to him, 1798.
This was stanza v. from 1798 to 1820.

And, as we talked, I questioned him, 1827.

[2] 1827.
"My little boy, which like you more,"
I said and took him by the arm—
"Our home by Kilve's delightful shore,
Or here at Liswyn farm?"

"And tell me, had you rather be,"
I said and held him by the arm,
"At Kilve's smooth shore by the green sea,
Or here at Liswyn farm?" 1798.
These two stanzas were compressed into one in 1827.

[3] 1836.
For, here are woods and green-hills warm; 1798.

Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm
For Kilve by the green sea."

At this, my boy hung down his head,
He blushed with shame, nor made reply;[1]
And three times to the child I said,[2]
"Why, Edward, tell me why?"

His head he raised—there was in sight,
It caught his eye, he saw it plain—
Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
A broad and gilded vane.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock,
And eased his mind with this reply:[3]
"At Kilve there was no weather-cock;
And that's the reason why."

O dearest, dearest boy! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn.*

[1] 1800.
At this, my boy, so fair and slim,
Hung down his head, nor made reply; 1798.

[2] 1845.
And five times did I say to him, 1798.
And five times to the child I said, 1800.

[3] 1836.
And thus to me he made reply; 1798.

* Mr. Ernest H. Coleridge writes to me of this poem: "The Fenwick note is most puzzling. 1. If Coleridge went to visit Thelwall, with Wordsworth and Dorothy in July 1798, this is the only record; but I suppose that he did. 2. How could the poem have been suggested in front of Alfoxden? The visit to Liswyn took place after the Wordsworths had left Alfoxden never to return. If little Montagu ever did compare Kilve and Liswyn Farm, he must have done so after he left Alfoxden. The scene is laid at Liswyn, and if the poem was written at Alfoxden, before the party visited Liswyn, the supposed reply was invented to a supposed question which might be put to the child when he got to Liswyn. How unlike Wordsworth. 3. Thelwall came to Alfoxden at the commencement of Wordsworth's tenancy; and the visit to Wales took place when the tenancy was over, July 3-10."—Ed.

"A WHIRL-BLAST FROM BEHIND THE HILL"

Composed March 18, 1798.—Published 1800

[Observed in the holly-grove at Alfoxden, where these verses were written in the spring of 1799.* I had the pleasure of again seeing, with dear friends, this grove in unimpaired beauty forty-one years after.†—I. F.]

Classed among the "Poems of the Fancy."—Ed.

A WHIRL-BLAST from behind the hill
Rushed o'er the wood with startling sound;
Then—all at once the air was still,
And showers of hailstones pattered round.
Where leafless oaks towered high above,
I sat within an undergrove
Of tallest hollies, tall and green;
A fairer bower was never seen.
From year to year the spacious floor
With withered leaves is covered o'er,
[1] And all the year the bower is green. ‡
But see! where'er the hailstones drop
The withered leaves all skip and hop;
There's not a breeze—no breath of air—
Yet here, and there, and every where
Along the floor, beneath the shade
By those embowering hollies made,
The leaves in myriads jump and spring,
As if with pipes and music rare

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[1] 1820.
You could not lay a hair between:
Inserted in the editions 1800-1815.

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* Dorothy Wordsworth's Journal gives the date 1798, and in the spring of 1799 the Wordsworths were not at Alfoxden but in Germany.—Ed.

† The friends were Mrs. Wordsworth, Miss Fenwick, Edward and Dora Quillinan, and William Wordsworth (the poet's son). The date was May 13, 1841.—Ed.

‡ Compare a letter from Wordsworth to Sir George Beaumont, written in November 1806, and one to Lady Beaumont in December 1806.—Ed.

Some Robin Good-fellow were there,
And all those leaves, in festive glee,
Were dancing to the minstrelsy.[1] [2] *

THE THORN

Composed March 19, 1798.—Published 1798

In the editions of 1800-1805, Wordsworth added the following note to this poem :—

"This Poem ought to have been preceded by an introductory Poem, which I have been prevented from writing by never having felt myself in a mood when it was probable that I should write it well.—The character which I have here introduced speaking is sufficiently common. The Reader will perhaps have a general notion of it, if he has ever known a man, a Captain of a small trading vessel for example, who being past the middle age of life, had retired upon an annuity or small independent income to some village or country town of which he was not a native, or in which he had not been accustomed to live. Such men having little to do become credulous and talkative from indolence; and from the same cause, and other predisposing causes by which it is probable that such men may have been affected, they are prone to superstition. On which account it appeared to me proper to select a character like this to exhibit some of the general laws

[1] 1815.

And all those leaves, that jump and spring,
Were each a joyous, living thing. 1800.

[2] The following additional lines occur in the editions 1800 to 1805—

Oh! grant me Heaven a heart at ease
That I may never cease to find,
Even in appearances like these
Enough to nourish and to stir my mind!

* "March 18, 1798. The Coleridges left us. A cold windy morning. Walked with them half-way. On our return, sheltered under the hollies during a hail shower. The withered leaves danced with the hailstones. William wrote a description of the storm" (Dorothy Wordsworth's Alfoxden Journal).—Ed.

by which superstition acts upon the mind. Superstitious men are almost always men of slow faculties and deep feelings; their minds are not loose but adhesive; they have a reasonable share of imagination, by which word I mean the faculty which produces impressive effects out of simple elements; but they are utterly destitute of fancy, the power by which pleasure and surprise are excited by sudden varieties of situation and by accumulated imagery.

"It was my wish in this poem to shew the manner in which such men cleave to the same ideas; and to follow the turns of passion, always different, yet not palpably different, by which their conversation is swayed. I had two objects to attain; first, to represent a picture which should not be unimpressive yet consistent with the character that should describe it, secondly, while I adhered to the style in which such persons describe, to take care that words, which in their minds are impregnated with passion, should likewise convey passion to Readers who are not accustomed to sympathize with men feeling in that manner or using such language. It seemed to me that this might be done by calling in the assistance of Lyrical and rapid Metre. It was neoessary that the Poem, to be natural, should in reality move slowly; yet I hoped, that, by the aid of the metre, to those who should at all enter into the spirit of the Poem, it would appear to move quickly. The Reader will have the kindness to excuse this note as I am sensible that an introductory Poem is necessary to give this Poem its full effect.

"Upon this occasion I will request permission to add a few words closely connected with *The Thorn* and many other Poems in these Volumes. There is a numerous class of readers who imagine that the same words cannot be repeated without tautology; this is a great error: virtual tautology is much oftener produced by using different words when the meaning is exactly the same. Words, a Poet's words more particularly, ought to be weighed in the balance of feeling and not measured by the space which they occupy upon paper. For the Reader cannot be too often reminded that Poetry is passion: it is the history or science of feelings: now every man must know that an attempt is rarely made to communicate impassioned feelings without something of an accompanying consciousness of the inadequateness of our own powers, or the deficiencies of language. During such efforts there will be a craving in the mind, and as long as it is unsatisfied the Speaker will cling to the same

words, or words of the same character. There are also various other reasons why repetition and apparent tautology are frequently beauties of the highest kind. Among the chief of these reasons is the interest which the mind attaches to words, not only as symbols of the passion, but as *things*, active and efficient, which are of themselves part of the passion. And further, from a spirit of fondness, exultation, and gratitude, the mind luxuriates in the repetition of words which appear successfully to communicate its feelings. The truth of these remarks might be shown by innumerable passages from the Bible and from the impassioned poetry of every nation.

Awake, awake, Deborah ! awake, awake, utter a song : Arise Barak, and lead captivity captive, thou Son of Abinoam.

At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down : at her feet he bowed, he fell : where he bowed there he fell down dead.

Why is his Chariot so long in coming? why tarry the Wheels of his Chariot?

Judges, chap. v. verses 12th, 27th, and part of 28th.

See also the whole of that tumultuous and wonderful Poem."

"The poem of *The Thorn*, as the reader will soon discover, is not supposed to be spoken in the author's own person : the character of the loquacious narrator will sufficiently shew itself in the course of the story."—W. W. Advertisement to "Lyrical Ballads," 1798.

[Alfoxden, 1798. Arose out of my observing, on the ridge of Quantock Hill, on a stormy day, a thorn, which I had often past in calm and bright weather, without noticing it. I said to myself, "Cannot I by some invention do as much to make this Thorn permanently as an impressive object as the storm has made it to my eyes at this moment?" I began the poem accordingly, and composed it with great rapidity. Sir George Beaumont painted a picture from it, which Wilkie thought his best. He gave it me : though when he saw it several times at Rydal Mount afterwards, he said, 'I could make a better, and would like to paint the same subject over again.' The sky in this picture is nobly done, but it reminds one too much of Wilson. The only fault, however, of any consequence is the female figure, which is too old and decrepit for one likely to frequent an eminence on such a call.—I. F.]

The Thorn was always placed among the "Poems of the Imagination."—Ed.

I

"THERE is a Thorn—it looks so old,
In truth, you'd find it hard to say
How it could ever have been young,
It looks so old and grey.
Not higher than a two years' child
It stands erect, this aged Thorn;
No leaves it has, no prickly[1] points;
It is a mass of knotted joints,
A wretched thing forlorn.
It stands erect, and like a stone
With lichens is it overgrown.[2]

II

"Like rock or stone, it is o'ergrown,
With lichens to the very top,
And hung with heavy tufts of moss,
A melancholy crop:
Up from the earth these mosses creep,
And this poor Thorn they clasp it round
So close, you'd say that they are[3] bent
With plain and manifest intent
To drag it to the ground;
And all have[4] joined in one endeavour
To bury this poor Thorn for ever.

III

"High on a mountain's highest ridge,
Where oft the stormy winter gale
Cuts like a scythe, while through the clouds
It sweeps from vale to vale;

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[1] 1836.
. . . . . thorny . 1798.

[2] 1836.
. . . it is overgrown. 1798.

[3] 1836.
. . . . . were . 1798.

[4] 1836.
. . had . . . . . . 1798.

Not five yards from the mountain path,
This Thorn you on your left espy;
And to the left, three yards beyond,
You see a little muddy pond
Of water—never dry
Though but of compass small, and bare
To thirsty suns and parching air.[1]*

IV

"And, close beside this aged Thorn,
There is a fresh and lovely sight,
A beauteous heap, a hill of moss,
Just half a foot in height.
All lovely colours there you see,
All colours that were ever seen;
And mossy network too is there,
As if by hand of lady fair
The work had woven been;
And cups, the darlings of the eye,
So deep is their vermilion dye.

V

"Ah me! what lovely tints are there
Of olive green and scarlet bright,
In spikes, in branches, and in stars,
Green, red, and pearly white!
This heap of earth o'ergrown with moss,
Which close beside the Thorn you see,
So fresh in all its beauteous dyes,
Is like an infant's grave in size,
As like as like can be:

---

[1] 1820.
I've measured it from side to side:
'Tis three feet long,† and two feet wide. 1798.

---

* "March 19, 1798. William and Basil and I walked to the hill tops. A very cold bleak day. William wrote some lines describing a stunted Thorn" (Dorothy Wordsworth's Alfoxden Journal).—Ed.

"April 20. Walked in the evening up the hill dividing the coombes. Came home the Crookham way, by the Thorn, and the little muddy pond" (Dorothy Wordsworth's Alfoxden Journal).—Ed.

† Compare in Bürger's *Pfarrer's Tochter*, "drei Spannen lang," and see Appendix V.—Ed.

But never, never any where,
An infant's grave was half so fair.

VI

" Now would you see this aged Thorn,
This pond, and beauteous hill of moss,
You must take care and choose your time
The mountain when to cross.
For oft there sits between the heap
So like [1] an infant's grave in size,
And that same pond of which I spoke,
A Woman in a scarlet cloak,
And to herself she cries,
'Oh misery! oh misery!
Oh woe is me! oh misery!'

VII

" At all times of the day and night
This wretched Woman thither goes;
And she is known to every star,
And every wind that blows;
And there, beside the Thorn, she sits
When the blue daylight's in the skies,
And when the whirlwind's on the hill,
Or frosty air is keen and still
And to herself she cries,
'Oh misery! oh misery!
Oh woe is me! oh misery!' "

VIII

" Now wherefore, thus, by day and night,
In rain, in tempest, and in snow,
Thus to the dreary mountain-top
Does this poor Woman go?
And why sits she beside the Thorn
When the blue daylight's in the sky,
Or when the whirlwind's on the hill,

[1] 1827.
That's like . . . . . . 1798.

Or frosty air is keen and still,
And wherefore does she cry?—
O wherefore? wherefore? tell me why
Does she repeat that doleful cry?"

IX

"I cannot tell; I wish I could;
For the true reason no one knows:
But would you[1] gladly view the spot,
The spot to which she goes;
The hillock like[2] an infant's grave,
The pond—and Thorn, so old and grey;
Pass by her door—'tis seldom shut—
And, if you see her in her hut—
Then to the spot away!
I never heard of such as dare
Approach the spot when she is there."

X

"But wherefore to the mountain-top
Can this unhappy Woman go,
Whatever star is in the skies,
Whatever wind may blow?"
[3]

---

[1] 1827.
But if you'd . . . . . 1798.

[2] 1827.
The heap that's like . . . . 1798.

[3] In the editions 1798 to 1815.
Nay rack your brain—'tis all in vain,
I'll tell you every thing I know;
But to the thorn, and to the pond
Which is a little step beyond,
I wish that you would go:
Perhaps when you are at the place
You something of her tale may trace.

XI

I'll give you the best help I can:
Before you up the mountain go,
Up to the dreary mountain-top,
I'll tell you all I know.

"Full twenty years are past and gone[1]
Since she (her name is Martha Ray)
Gave with a maiden's true good-will
Her company to Stephen Hill;
And she was blithe and gay,
While friends and kindred all approved
Of him whom tenderly she loved.[2]

XI

"And they had fixed the wedding day,
The morning that must wed them both;
But Stephen to another Maid
Had sworn another oath;
And, with this other Maid, to church
Unthinking Stephen went—
Poor Martha! on that woeful day
A pang of pitiless dismay
Into her soul was sent;
A fire was kindled in her breast,
Which might not burn itself to rest.[3]

XII

"They say, full six months after this,
While yet the summer leaves were green,
She to the mountain-top would go,

---

[1] 1845.
'Tis now some two and twenty years, 1798.
'Tis known, that twenty years are passed 1820.

[2] 1820.
And she was happy, happy still
Whene'er she thought of Stephen Hill. 1798.

[3] 1815.
. . . on that woful day
A cruel, cruel fire, they say,
Into her bones was sent:
It dried her body like a cinder,
And almost turn'd her brain to tinder. 1798.

And there was often seen.
What could she seek?—or wish to hide?
Her state to any eye was plain;[1]
She was with child, and she was mad;
Yet often was she[2] sober sad
From her exceeding pain.
O guilty Father—would that death
Had saved him from that breach of faith![3]

XIII

"Sad case for such a brain to hold
Communion with a stirring child!
Sad case, as you may think, for one
Who had a brain so wild!
Last Christmas-eve we talked of this,
And grey-haired Wilfred of the glen
Held that the unborn infant wrought[4]
About its mother's heart, and brought
Her senses back again:
And, when at last her time drew near,
Her looks were calm, her senses clear.

---

[1] 1836.
'Tis said, a child was in her womb,
As now to any eye was plain; 1798.

'Tis said, her lamentable state
Even to a careless eye was plain; 1820.

Alas! her lamentable state 1827.

[2] 1836.
. . . she was . . . . 1798.

[3] 1820.
Oh me! ten thousand times I'd rather
That he had died, that cruel father! 1798.

[4] 1820.
Last Christmas when we talked of this,
Old Farmer Simpson did maintain,
That in her womb the infant wrought 1798.

XIV

"More know I not, I wish I did,
And it should all be told to you;[1]
For what became of this poor child
No mortal ever knew;[2]
Nay—if a child to her was born
No earthly tongue could ever tell;[3]
And if 'twas born alive or dead,
Far less could this with proof be said;[4]
But some remember well,
That Martha Ray about this time
Would up the mountain often climb.

XV

"And all that winter, when at night
The wind blew from the mountain-peak,
'Twas worth your while, though in the dark,
The churchyard path to seek:
For many a time and oft were heard
Cries coming from the mountain head:
Some plainly living voices were;
And others, I've heard many swear,
Were voices of the dead:
I cannot think, whate'er they say,
They had to do with Martha Ray.

XVI

"But that she goes to this old Thorn,
The Thorn which I described[5] to you,

---

[1] 1827.
No more I know, I wish I did,
And I would tell it all to you; 1798.

[2] 1827.
There's none that ever knew: 1798.

[3] 1827.
And if a child was born or no,
There's no one that could ever tell; 1798.

[4] 1827.
There's no one knows, as I have said, 1798.

[5] 1827.
. . . I've described . 1798.

And there sits in a scarlet cloak,
I will be sworn is true.
For one day with my telescope,
To view the ocean wide and bright,
When to this country first I came,
Ere I had heard of Martha's name,
I climbed the mountain's height:—
A storm came on, and I could see
No object higher than my knee.

XVII

"'Twas mist and rain, and storm and rain:
No screen, no fence could I discover;
And then the wind! in sooth,[1] it was
A wind full ten times over.
I looked around, I thought I saw
A jutting crag,—and off I ran,
Head-foremost, through the driving rain,
The shelter of the crag to gain;
And, as I am a man,
Instead of jutting crag, I found
A Woman seated on the ground.

XVIII

"I did not speak—I saw her face;
Her face!—it was [2] enough for me;
I turned about and heard her cry,
'Oh misery! oh misery!'
And there she sits, until the moon
Through half the clear blue sky will go;
And, when the little breezes make
The waters of the pond to shake,
As all the country know,
She shudders, and you hear her cry,
'Oh misery! oh misery!'"

[1] 1845.
. . . . . . in faith, . . 1798.

[2] 1798.
In truth, it was . . . . . 1800.
The edition of 1815 returns to the text of 1798.

XIX

"But what's the Thorn? and what the pond?
And what the hill of moss to her?
And what the creeping breeze that comes[1]
The little pond to stir?"
"I cannot tell; but some will say
She hanged her baby on the tree;
Some say she drowned it in the pond,
Which is a little step beyond:
But all and each agree,
The little Babe was buried there,
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

XX

"I've heard, the moss is spotted red[2]
With drops of that poor infant's blood;
But kill a new-born infant thus,
I do not think she could!
Some say, if to the pond you go,
And fix on it a steady view,
The shadow of a babe you trace,
A baby and a baby's face,
And that it looks at you;
Whene'er you look on it, 'tis plain
The baby looks at you again.

XXI

"And some had sworn an oath that she
Should be to public justice brought;
And for the little infant's bones
With spades they would have sought.

---

[1] 1827.

. . . . . and what's the pond?
And what's the hill of moss to her?
And what's the . . . . 1798.

[2] 1800.

I've heard the scarlet moss is red 1798.

But instantly the hill of moss[1]
Before their eyes began to stir!
And, for full fifty yards around,
The grass—it shook upon the ground!
Yet[2] all do still aver
The little Babe lies[3] buried there,
Beneath that hill of moss so fair.

XXII

"I cannot tell how this may be
But plain it is the Thorn is bound
With heavy tufts of moss that strive
To drag it to the ground;
And this I know, full many a time,
When she was on the mountain high,
By day, and in the silent night,
When all the stars shone clear and bright,
That I have heard her cry,
'Oh misery! oh misery!
Oh woe is me! oh misery!'"

Compare *The Heart of Midlothian* (vol. iii. chap. v. edition of 1818).

"Are ye sure ye ken the way ye are taking us?" said Jeanie, who began to imagine that she was getting deeper into the woods, and more remote from the highroad.

"Do I ken the road? Wasna I mony a day living here, and what for shouldna I ken the road? I might hae forgotten, too, for it was afore my accident; but there are some things ane can never forget, let them try it as muckle as they like."

---

[1] 1845.

But then the beauteous hill of moss	1798.
It might not be—the Hill of moss	1827.
But then the beauteous Hill of moss	1832.
(Returning to the text of	1798.)
But then the speckled hill of moss	1836,

[2] 1827.

But	1798.

[3] 1845.

. . . . is buried .	1798.

By this time they had gained the deepest part of a patch of woodland. The trees were a little separated from each other, and at the foot of one of them, a beautiful poplar, was a hillock of moss, such as the poet of Grasmere has described in the motto to our chapter. So soon as she arrived at this spot, Madge Wildfire, joining her hands above her head, with a loud scream that resembled laughter, flung herself all at once upon the spot, and remained there lying motionless.

Jeanie's first idea was to take the opportunity of flight; but her desire to escape yielded for a moment to apprehension for the poor insane being, who, she thought, might perish for want of relief. With an effort, which, in her circumstances, might be termed heroic, she stooped down, spoke in a soothing tone, and tried to raise up the forlorn creature. She effected this with difficulty, and as she placed her against the tree in a sitting posture, she observed with surprise, that her complexion, usually florid, was now deadly pale, and that her face was bathed in tears. Notwithstanding her own extreme danger, Jeanie was affected by the situation of her companion; and the rather that, through the whole train of her wavering and inconsistent state of mind and line of conduct, she discerned a general colour of kindness towards herself, for which she felt gratitude.

"Let me alane!—let me alane!" said the poor young woman, as her paroxysm of sorrow began to abate. "Let me alane; it does me good to weep. I canna shed tears but maybe anes or twice a-year, and I aye come to wet this turf with them, that the flowers may grow fair, and the grass may be green."

"But what is the matter with you?" said Jeanie. "Why do you weep so bitterly?"

"There's matter enow," replied the lunatic; "mair than ae puir mind can bear, I trow. Stay a bit, and I'll tell you a' about it; for I like ye, Jeanie Deans; a'body spoke weel about ye when we lived in the Pleasaunts. And I mind aye the drink o' milk ye gae me yon day, when I had been on Arthur's Seat for four-and-twenty hours, looking for the ship that somebody was sailing in."—ED.

GOODY BLAKE AND HARRY GILL

A True Story

Composed 1798.—Published 1798

[Written at Alfoxden. The incident from Dr. Darwin's *Zoönomia.*—I. F.]

See Erasmus Darwin's *Zoönomia*, vol. iv. pp. 68-69, ed. 1801. It is the story of a man named Tullis, narrated by an Italian, Signor L. Storgosi, in a work called *Il Narratore Italiano.*

"I received good information of the truth of the following case, which was published a few years ago in the newspapers. A young farmer in Warwickshire, finding his hedges broke, and the sticks carried away during a frosty season, determined to watch for the thief. He lay many cold hours under a hay-stack, and at length an old woman, like a witch in a play, approached, and began to pull up the hedge; he waited till she had tied up her bundle of sticks, and was carrying them off, that he might convict her of the theft, and then springing from his concealment, he seized his prey with violent threats. After some altercation, in which her load was left upon the ground, she kneeled upon her bundle of sticks, and raising her arms to Heaven, beneath the bright moon then at the full, spoke to the farmer, already shivering with cold, 'Heaven grant that thou mayest never know again the blessing to be warm.' He complained of cold all the next day, and wore an upper coat, and in a few days another, and in a fortnight took to his bed, always saying nothing made him warm; he covered himself with many blankets, and had a sieve over his face as he lay; and from this one insane idea he kept his bed above went years for fear of the cold air, till at length he died."

In the "Advertisement" to the first edition of "Lyrical Ballads," Wordsworth says, "The tale of *Goody Blake and Harry Gill* is founded on a well-authenticated fact which happened in Warwickshire."

The following curious letter appeared in the *Ipswich Magazine* of April 1799:—

"IPSWICH, *April* 2, 1799.

"To the Editors of the *Ipswich Magazine*.

"GENTLEMEN—The scarcity of Coal at this time, and the piercing cold of the weather, cannot fail to be some apology for the depredations daily committed on the hedges in the neighbourhood. If ever it be permitted, it ought in the present season. Should there be any Farmer more rigorous than the rest, let him attend to the poetical story inserted in page 118 of this Magazine, and tremble at the fate of Farmer Gill, who was about to prosecute a poor old woman for a similar offence. The thing is a fact, and told by one of the first physicians of the present day, as having happened in the south of England, ***and which has, a short time since***, been turned by ***a lyric poet*** into that excellent ballad."

From 1815 to 1843, this poem was classed among those of "the Imagination." In 1845 it was transferred to the list of "Miscellaneous Poems."—ED.

OH! what's the matter? what's the matter?
What is't that ails young Harry Gill?
That evermore his teeth they chatter,
Chatter, chatter, chatter still!
Of waistcoats Harry has no lack,
Good duffle grey, and flannel fine;
He has a blanket on his back,
And coats enough to smother nine.

In March, December, and in July,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill;
The neighbours tell, and tell you truly,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
At night, at morning, and at noon,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill;
Beneath the sun, beneath the moon,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still!

Young Harry was a lusty drover,
And who so stout of limb as he?
His cheeks were red as ruddy clover;
His voice was like the voice of three.
Old[1] Goody Blake was old and poor;

[1] 1802.
Auld . . . . 1798.

Ill fed she was, and thinly clad;
And any man who passed her door
Might see how poor a hut she had.

All day she spun in her poor dwelling:
And then her three hours' work at night,
Alas! 'twas hardly worth the telling,
It would not pay for candle-light.
Remote from sheltered village-green,
On a hill's northern side she dwelt,
Where from sea-blasts the hawthorns lean,
And hoary dews are slow to melt.[1]

By the same fire to boil their pottage,
Two poor old Dames, as I have known,
Will often live in one small cottage;
But she, poor Woman! housed[2] alone.
'Twas well enough when summer came,
The long, warm, lightsome summer-day,
Then at her door the *canty* Dame
Would sit, as any linnet, gay.

But when the ice our streams did fetter,
Oh then how her old bones would shake!
You would have said, if you had met her,
'Twas a hard time for Goody Blake.
Her evenings then were dull and dead:
Sad case it was, as you may think,
For very cold to go to bed;
And then for cold not sleep a wink.

---

[1] 1836.

—This woman dwelt in Dorsetshire,
Her hut was on a cold hill-side,
And in that country coals are dear,
For they come far by wind and tide. 1798.

Remote from sheltering village green,
Upon a bleak hill-side, she dwelt,
Where from sea-blasts the hawthorns lean,
And hoary dews are slow to melt. 1820.

On a hill's northern side she dwelt. 1827.

[2] 1820.

. . . . . dwelt . . . . 1798.

O joy for her! whene'er in winter
The winds at night had made a rout;
And scattered many a lusty splinter
And many a rotten bough about.
Yet never had she, well or sick,
As every man who knew her says,
A pile beforehand, turf[1] or stick,
Enough to warm her for three days.

Now, when the frost was past enduring,
And made her poor old bones to ache,
Could anything be more alluring
Than an old hedge to Goody Blake?
And, now and then, it must be said,
When her old bones were cold and chill,
She left her fire, or left her bed,
To seek the hedge of Harry Gill.

Now Harry he had long suspected
This trespass of old Goody Blake;
And vowed that she should be detected—
That[2] he on her would vengeance take.
And oft from his warm fire he'd go,
And to the fields his road would take;
And there, at night, in frost and snow,
He watched to seize old Goody Blake.

And once, behind a rick of barley,
Thus looking out did Harry stand:
The moon was full and shining clearly,
And crisp with frost the stubble land.
—He hears a noise—he's all awake—
Again?—on tip-toe down the hill
He softly creeps—'tis Goody Blake;
She's at the hedge of Harry Gill!

[1] 1827.
. . . . wood . . . 1798

[2] 1836.
And . . . . 1798.

Right glad was he when he beheld her:
Stick after stick did Goody pull:
He stood behind a bush of elder,
Till she had filled her apron full.
When with her load she turned about,
The by-way[1] back again to take;
He started forward, with a shout,
And sprang upon poor Goody Blake.

And fiercely by the arm he took her,
And by the arm he held her fast,
And fiercely by the arm he shook her,
And cried, "I've caught you then at last!"
Then Goody, who had nothing said,
Her bundle from her lap let fall;
And, kneeling on the sticks, she prayed
To God that is the judge of all.

She prayed, her withered hand uprearing,
While Harry held her by the arm—
"God! who art never out of hearing,
O may he never more be warm!"
The cold, cold moon above her head,
Thus on her knees did Goody pray;
Young Harry heard what she had said:
And icy cold he turned away.

He went complaining all the morrow
That he was cold and very chill:
His face was gloom, his heart was sorrow,
Alas! that day for Harry Gill!
That day he wore a riding-coat,
But not a whit the warmer he:
Another was on Thursday brought,
And ere the Sabbath he had three.

---

[1] 1827.
The bye-road . . . . 1798.

'Twas all in vain, a useless matter,
And blankets were about him pinned;
Yet still his jaws and teeth they clatter,
Like a loose casement in the wind.
And Harry's flesh it fell away;
And all who see him say, 'tis plain
That, live as long as live he may,
He never will be warm again.

No word to any man he utters,
A-bed or up, to young or old;
But ever to himself he mutters,
"Poor Harry Gill is very cold."
A-bed or up, by night or day;
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
Now think, ye farmers all, I pray,
Of Goody Blake and Harry Gill! *

HER EYES ARE WILD

Composed 1798.—Published 1798

[Written at Alfoxden. The subject was reported to me by a lady of Bristol, who had seen the poor creature.—I. F.]

From 1798 to 1805 this poem was published under the title of *The Mad Mother*.

In the editions of 1815 and 1820 it was ranked as one of the "Poems founded on the Affections." In the editions of 1827 and 1832, it was classed as one of the "Poems of the Imagination." In 1836 and afterwards, it was replaced among the "Poems founded on the Affections."—Ed.

I

Her eyes are wild, her head is bare,
The sun has burnt her coal-black hair;
Her eyebrows have a rusty stain,
And she came far from over the main.

* Compare the many entries about "gathering sticks" in the Alfoxden woods, in Dorothy Wordsworth's Journal.—Ed.

She has a baby on her arm,
Or else she were alone:
And underneath the hay-stack warm,
And on the greenwood stone,
She talked and sung the woods among,
And it was in the English tongue.

II

"Sweet babe! they say that I am mad
But nay, my heart is far too glad;
And I am happy when I sing
Full many a sad and doleful thing:
Then, lovely baby, do not fear!
I pray thee have no fear of me;
But safe as in a cradle, here
My lovely baby! thou shalt be:
To thee I know too much I owe;
I cannot work thee any woe.

III

"A fire was once within my brain;
And in my head a dull, dull pain;
And fiendish faces, one, two, three,
Hung at my breast,[1] and pulled at me;
But then there came a sight of joy;
It came at once to do me good;
I waked, and saw my little boy,
My little boy of flesh and blood;
Oh joy for me that sight to see!
For he was here, and only he.

IV

"Suck, little babe, oh suck again!
It cools my blood; it cools my brain;
Thy lips I feel them, baby! they
Draw from my heart the pain away.

[1] 1820.
. . . breasts . . . . . 1798.

Oh! press me with thy little hand;
It loosens something at my chest;
About that tight and deadly band
I feel thy little fingers prest.
The breeze I see is in the tree:
It comes to cool my babe and me.

V

"Oh! love me, love me, little boy!
Thou art thy mother's only joy;
And do not dread the waves below,
When o'er the sea-rock's edge we go;
The high crag cannot work me harm,
Nor leaping torrents when they howl;
The babe I carry on my arm,
He saves for me my precious soul;
Then happy lie; for blest am I;
Without me my sweet babe would die.

VI

"Then do not fear, my boy! for thee
Bold as a lion will I be;[1]
And I will always be thy guide,
Through hollow snows and rivers wide.
I'll build an Indian bower; I know
The leaves that make the softest bed:
And, if from me thou wilt not go,
But still be true till I am dead,
My pretty thing! then thou shalt sing
As merry as the birds in spring.

VII

"Thy father cares not for my breast,
'Tis thine, sweet baby, there to rest;
'Tis all thine own!—and, if its hue
Be changed, that was so fair to view,

[1] 1832.
. . . . I will be; 1798.

'Tis fair enough for thee, my dove!
My beauty, little child, is flown,
But thou wilt live with me in love;
And what if my poor cheek be brown?
'Tis well for me, thou canst not see
How pale and wan it else would be.

VIII

"Dread not their taunts, my little Life;
I am thy father's wedded wife;
And underneath the spreading tree
We two will live in honesty.
If his sweet boy he could forsake,
With me he never would have stayed:
From him no harm my babe can take;
But he, poor man! is wretched made;
And every day we two will pray
For him that's gone and far away.

IX

"I'll teach my boy the sweetest things:
I'll teach him how the owlet sings.
My little babe! thy lips are still,
And thou hast almost sucked thy fill.
—Where art thou gone, my own dear child?
What wicked looks are those I see?
Alas! alas! that look so wild,
It never, never came from me:
If thou art mad, my pretty lad,
Then I must be for ever sad.

X

"Oh! smile on me, my little lamb!
For I thy own dear mother am:
My love for thee has well been tried:
I've sought thy father far and wide.

I know the poisons of the shade;
I know the earth-nuts fit for food:
Then, pretty dear, be not afraid:
We'll find thy father in the wood.
Now laugh and be gay, to the woods away!
And there, my babe, we'll live for aye." *

SIMON LEE,

THE OLD HUNTSMAN;

WITH AN INCIDENT IN WHICH HE WAS CONCERNED

Composed 1798.—Published 1798

[This old man had been huntsman to the Squires of Alfoxden, which, at the time we occupied it, belonged to a minor. The old man's cottage stood upon the Common, a little way from the entrance to Alfoxden Park. But it had disappeared. Many other changes had taken place in the adjoining village, which I could not but notice with a regret more natural than well-considered. Improvements but rarely appear such to those who, after long intervals of time, revisit places they have had much pleasure in. It is unnecessary to add, the fact was as mentioned in the poem; and I have, after an interval of forty-five years, the image of the old man as fresh before my eyes as if I had seen him yesterday. The expression when the hounds were out, 'I dearly love their voice,' was word for word from his own lips.—I. F.]

This poem was classed among those of "Sentiment and Reflection."—ED.

IN the sweet shire of Cardigan,
Not far from pleasant Ivor-hall,

* "For myself, I would rather have written *The Mad Mother* than all the works of all the Bolingbrokes and Sheridans, those brilliant meteors, that have been exhaled from the morasses of human depravity since the loss of Paradise." (S. T. C. to W. Godwin, 9th December 1800.) See *William Godwin: his Friends and Contemporaries*, vol. ii. p. 14.—ED.

An old Man dwells, a little man,—
'Tis said[1] he once was tall.
[2] Full five-and-thirty[3] years he lived
A running huntsman merry;
And still the centre of his cheek
Is red as a ripe cherry.[4]

No man like him the horn could sound,
And hill and valley rang with glee
When Echo bandied, round and round,
The halloo of Simon Lee.
In those proud days, he little cared
For husbandry or tillage;
To blither tasks did Simon rouse
The sleepers of the village.[5]

---

[1] 1827.
I've heard . . . . 1798.

[2] In editions 1798 to 1815 the following is inserted:—
Of years he has upon his back,
No doubt, a burthen weighty;
He says he is three score and ten,
But others say he's eighty.

A long blue livery-coat has he,
That's fair behind, and fair before;
Yet, meet him where you will, you see
At once that he is poor.

[3] 1827.
. . five and twenty . . . . 1798.

[4] 1845.
And, though he has but one eye left,
His cheek is like a cherry. 1798.

And still the centre of his cheek
Is blooming as a cherry. 1820.

[5] 1827.
No man like him the horn could sound,
And no man was so full of glee;
To say the least, four counties round
Had heard of Simon Lee;
His master's dead, and no one now
Dwells in the hall of Ivor;
Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead;
He is the sole survivor. 1798.

He all the country could outrun,
Could leave both man and horse behind;
And often, ere the chase[1] was done,
He reeled, and was stone blind.
And still there's something in the world
At which his heart rejoices;
For when the chiming hounds are out,
He dearly loves their voices!

But, oh the heavy change!*—bereft
Of health, strength, friends, and kindred, see![2]
Old Simon to the world is left
In liveried poverty.
His Master's dead,—and no one now
Dwells in the Hall of Ivor;
Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead;
He is the sole survivor.[3]

Worn out by hunting feats—bereft
By time of friends and kindred, see!
Old Simon to the world is left
In liveried poverty.
His Master's dead, . . . 1827.

The fourth stanza of the final edition being second in 1827, and the second stanza being third in 1827.

1 1827.
. . . . race . . . 1798.

2 Of strength, of friends, and kindred, see.
In MS. letter to Allan Cunningham, Nov. 1828.

3 1832.
His hunting feats have him bereft
Of his right eye, as you may see:
And then, what limbs those feats have left
To poor old Simon Lee!
He has no son, he has no child,
His wife, an aged woman,
Lives with him, near the waterfall,
Upon the village common. 1798.

His hunting feats have him bereft
Of his right eye, as you may see,
And Simon to the world is left,

---

* Note that the phrase: 'But oh the heavy change,' occurs in Milton's *Lycidas*. (Professor Dowden.) See *Lycidas*, l. 37.—Ed.

And [1] he is lean and he is sick;
His body, dwindled and awry,
Rests upon ankles swoln and thick;
His legs are thin and dry.
One prop he has, and only one,
His wife, an aged woman,
Lives with him, near the waterfall,
Upon the village Common.[2]

Beside their moss-grown hut of clay,
Not twenty paces from the door,
A scrap of land they have, but they
Are poorest of the poor.
This scrap of land he from the heath
Enclosed when he was stronger;

In liveried poverty.
When he was young he little knew
Of husbandry or tillage;
And now is forced to work, though weak,
—The weakest in the village. 1820.

[1] 1798.
But . . . . . . 1820.
The text of 1832 reverts to that of 1798.

[2] 1827.
His little body's half awry,
His ancles they are swoln and thick;
His legs are thin and dry.
When he was young he little knew
Of husbandry or tillage;
And now he's forced to work, though weak,
—The weakest in the village. 1798.

His dwindled body's half awry, 1800.

His ancles, too, are swoln and thick; 1815.

And now is forced to work, . 1815.

His dwindled body half awry,
Rests upon ancles swoln and thick;
His legs are thin and dry.
He has no son, he has no child,
His Wife, an aged woman,
Lives with him, near the waterfall,
Upon the village Common. 1820.

But what to them avails the land
Which he can till no longer?[1]

Oft, working by her Husband's side,
Ruth does what Simon cannot do;
For she, with scanty cause for pride,[2]
Is stouter of the two.
And, though you with your utmost skill
From labour could not wean them,
'Tis little, very little—all
That they can do between them.[3]

Few months of life has he in store
As he to you will tell,
For still, the more he works, the more
Do his weak ankles swell.[4]
My gentle Reader, I perceive
How patiently you've waited,

---

[1] 1845.

But what avails the land to them,
Which they can till no longer? 1798.

"But what," saith he, "avails the land,
Which I can till no longer?" 1827.

But what avails it now, the land
Which he can till no longer? 1832.

'Tis his, but what avails the land
Which he can till no longer? 1837.

The time, alas! is come when he
Can till the land no longer. 1840.

The time is also come when he
Can till the land no longer. C.

[2] 1827.

Old Ruth works out of doors with him,
And does what Simon cannot do;
For she, not over stout of limb, 1798.

[3] 1840.

Alas! 'tis very little, all
Which they can . . . . 1798.
That they can . . . . 1837.

[4] 1815.

His poor old ancles swell. 1798.

And now I fear[1] that you expect
Some tale will be related.

O Reader! had you in your mind
Such stores as silent thought can bring,*
O gentle Reader! you would find
A tale in every thing.
What more I have to say is short,
And you must[2] kindly take it:
It is no tale; but, should you think,[3]
Perhaps a tale you'll make it.

One summer-day I chanced to see
This old Man doing all he could
To unearth the root[4] of an old tree,
A stump of rotten wood.
The mattock tottered in his hand;
So vain was his endeavour,
That at the root of the old tree
He might have worked for ever.

"You're overtasked, good Simon Lee,
Give me your tool," to him I said;
And at the word right gladly he
Received my proffered aid.
I struck, and with a single blow
The tangled root I severed,

[1] 1820.
And I'm afraid . . . . . 1798.

[2] 1820.
I hope you'll . . . . . . 1798.

[3] 1798.
. . . . *think,*
In the editions 1832 to 1843.

[4] 1815.
About the root . . . . . 1798.

* Compare Shakspeare's Sonnet, No. xxx.,
When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past;
and in Spenser's *An epitaph upon the Right Honourable Sir Phillip Sidney, Knight; Lord governor of Flushing.*
Farewell, self-pleasing thoughts, which quietness brings forth.—Ed.

At which the poor old Man so long
And vainly had endeavoured.

The tears into his eyes were brought,
And thanks and praises seemed to run
So fast out of his heart, I thought
They never would have done.
—I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With coldness still returning;
Alas! the gratitude of men
Hath oftener[1] left me mourning.*

LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING

Composed 1798.—Published 1798

[Actually composed while I was sitting by the side of the brook that runs down from the *Comb*, in which stands the village of Alford, through the grounds of Alfoxden. It was a chosen resort of mine. The brook ran down a sloping rock, so as to make a waterfall, considerable for that county; and across the pool below had fallen a tree—an ash if I rightly remember—from which rose perpendicularly, boughs in search of the light intercepted by the deep shade above. The boughs bore leaves of green, that for want of sunshine had faded into almost lily-white; and from the underside of this natural sylvan bridge depended long and beautiful tresses of ivy, which waved gently in the breeze, that might, poetically speaking, be called the breath of the waterfall. This motion varied of course in proportion to the power of water in the brook. When, with dear friends, I revisited this spot, after an interval of more than forty years,† this interesting feature of the scene was gone. To the owner of the place I could not but regret that the beauty of this retired part of the grounds had not tempted him to make it more accessible by a path, not broad or obtrusive, but sufficient for persons who love such scenes to creep along without difficulty.—I. F.]

[1] 1820.

Has oftner	. . . .	1798.
Has oftener	. . . .	1805.

* See Appendix VI. to this volume.—Ed.

† See the Fenwick note to "A whirl-blast from behind the hill," p. 238.—Ed.

These *Lines* were included among the "Poems of Sentiment and Reflection."—ED.

I HEARD a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that green[1] bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.*

The birds around me hopped and played,
Their thoughts I cannot measure:—
But the least motion which they made,
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,[2]
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

---

[1] 1837.
. . . . sweet . 1798.

[2] 1837.
If I these thoughts may not prevent,
If such be of my creed the plan, 1798.
If this belief from Heaven is sent,
If such be nature's holy plan, 1820.
From Heaven if this belief be sent, 1827.

---

* See Appendix VII.—ED.

This Alfoxden dell, once known locally as "The Mare's Pool," was a trysting-place of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and their friends. Coleridge thus describes it, in his poem beginning "This Lime-Tree Bower, my Prison," addressed to Charles Lamb—

The roaring dell, o'er-wooded, narrow, deep,
And only speckled by the midday sun;
Where its slim trunk the ash from rock to rock
Flings arching like a bridge;—that branchless ash,
Unsunn'd and damp, whose few poor yellow leaves
Ne'er tremble in the gale, yet tremble still,
Fanned by the waterfall!

Of all the localities around Alfoxden, this grove is the one chiefly associated with Wordsworth. There was no path to the waterfall, as suggested by the Poet to the owner of the place, in 1840; but, in 1880, I found the "natural sylvan bridge" restored. An ash tree, having fallen across the glen, reproduced the scene exactly as it is described in the Fenwick note.—Ed.

TO MY SISTER

Composed 1798.—Published 1798

[Composed in front of Alfoxden House. My little boy-messenger on this occasion was the son of Basil Montagu. The larch mentioned in the first stanza was standing when I revisited the place in May 1841, more than forty years after. I was disappointed that it had not improved in appearance as to size, nor had it acquired anything of the majesty of age, which, even though less perhaps than any other tree, the larch sometimes does. A few score yards from this tree, grew, when we inhabited Alfoxden, one of the most remarkable beech-trees ever seen. The ground sloped both towards and from it. It was of immense size, and threw out arms that struck into the soil, like those of the banyan-tree, and rose again from it. Two of the branches thus inserted themselves twice, which gave to each the appearance of a serpent moving along by gathering itself up in folds. One of the large boughs of this tree had been torn off by the wind before we left Alfoxden, but five remained. In 1841 we could barely find the spot where the tree had stood. So remarkable a production of nature could not have been wilfully destroyed.—I. F.]

In the editions 1798 to 1815 the title of this poem was, *Lines written at a small distance from my House, and sent by my little Boy to the person to whom they are addressed.* From 1820 to 1843 the title was, *To my Sister; written at a small distance from my House, and sent by my little Boy.* In 1845 and afterwards, it was simply *To my Sister.* The poem was placed by Wordsworth among those of "Sentiment and Reflection."—ED.

IT is the first mild day of March:
Each minute sweeter than before
The redbreast sings from the tall larch
That stands beside our door.

There is a blessing in the air,
Which seems a sense of joy to yield
To the bare trees, and mountains bare,
And grass in the green field.

My sister! ('tis a wish of mine)
Now that our morning meal is done,
Make haste, your morning task resign;
Come forth and feel the sun.

Edward will come with you;—and, pray,
Put on with speed your woodland dress;
And bring no book: for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

No joyless forms shall regulate
Our living calendar:
We from to-day, my Friend, will date
The opening of the year.

Love, now a [1] universal birth,
From heart to heart is stealing,
From earth to man, from man to earth:
—It is the hour of feeling.

---

[1] 1837.
. . an . . . . . . 1798.

One moment now may give us more
Than years of toiling reason:[1]
Our minds shall drink at every pore
The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts will[2] make,
Which they shall long obey:
We for the year to come may take
Our temper from to-day.

And from the blessed power that rolls
About, below, above,
We'll frame the measure of our souls:
They shall be tuned to love.

Then come, my Sister! come, I pray,
With speed put on your woodland dress;
And bring no book: for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

The larch is now gone; but the place where it stood can easily be identified.—ED.

EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY

Composed 1798.—Published 1798

[This poem is a favourite among the Quakers, as I have learned on many occasions. It was composed in front of the house of Alfoxden, in the spring of 1798.*—I. F.]

Included among the "Poems of Sentiment and Reflection."—ED.

"WHY, William, on that old grey stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,

---

[1] 1837.
Than fifty years of reason; 1798.

[2] 1820.
. . . . . may . 1798.

---

* In his "Advertisement" to the first edition of "Lyrical Ballads" (1798) Wordsworth writes, "The lines entitled *Expostulation and Reply*, and those which follow, arose out of conversation with a friend who was somewhat unreasonably attached to modern books of Moral Philosophy." Was the friend Sir James Mackintosh? or was it—a much more probable supposition—his friend, S. T. Coleridge?—ED.

Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?

"Where are your books?—that light bequeathed
To Beings else forlorn and blind!
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

"You look round on your Mother Earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!"

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply.

"The eye—it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
Against or with our will.

"Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

"—Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away."

THE TABLES TURNED

AN EVENING SCENE ON THE SAME SUBJECT

Composed 1798.—Published 1798

Included among the "Poems of Sentiment and Reflection."
—ED.

UP! up! my Friend, and quit your books;
Or surely you'll grow double:
Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?[1]

The sun, above the mountain's head,
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is[2] no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your Teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—

---

[1] 1820.
Up! up! my friend, and clear your looks,
Why all this toil and trouble?
Up! up! my friend, and quit your books,
Or surely you'll grow double. 1798.

[2] 1815.
And he is . . . . 1798.

Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.*

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:—
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
Close up those[1] barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

THE COMPLAINT

Of a Forsaken Indian Woman

Composed 1798.—Published 1798

When a Northern Indian, from sickness, is unable to continue his journey with his companions; he is left behind, covered over with Deer-skins, and is supplied with water, food, and fuel if the situation of the place will afford it. He is informed of the track which his companions intend to pursue, and if he is unable to follow, or overtake them, he perishes alone in the Desart; unless he should have the good fortune to fall in with

[1] 1837.
. . . these . . . 1798.

* A mediæval anticipation of this may be quoted in a footnote. "Believe me, as my own experience," once said St. Bernard, "you will find more in the woods than in books; the forests and rocks will teach you more than you can learn from the greatest Masters." I quote this, as sent to me by a friend; but the only passage at all approaching to it which I can verify is the following—"Quidquid in Scripturis valet, quidquid in eis spiritualiter sentit, maxime in silvis et in agris meditando et orando se confitetur accepisse, et in hoc nullos aliquando se magistros habuisse nisi quercus et fagos joco illo suo gratioso inter amicos dicere solet." See the appendix to Mabillon's edition of Bernardi Opera, ii. 1072, *S. Bernardi Vitæ, et Res Gestæ, auctore Guilielmo.*—Ed.

some other Tribes of Indians. It is unnecessary to add that the females are equally, or still more, exposed to the same fate. See that very interesting work, Hearne's *Journey from Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean*. When the Northern Lights, as the same writer informs us, vary their position in the air, they make a rustling and a crackling noise. This circumstance is alluded to in the first stanza of the following poem.—W. W. 1798.

[At Alfoxden, in 1798, where I read Hearne's *Journey* with deep interest. It was composed for the volume of "Lyrical Ballads."—I. F.]

Classed among the "Poems founded on the Affections." —Ed.

I

Before I see another day,
Oh let my body die away!
In sleep I heard the northern gleams;
The stars, they were among my dreams;[1]
In rustling conflict through the skies,[2]
I heard, I saw the flashes drive,[3]
And yet they are upon my eyes,
And yet I am alive;
Before I see another day,
Oh let my body die away!

II

My fire is dead: it knew no pain;
Yet is it dead, and I remain:
All stiff with ice the ashes lie;
And they are dead, and I will die.
When I was well, I wished to live,
For clothes, for warmth, for food, and fire;
But they to me no joy can give,

---

[1] 1798.
The stars were mingled with my dreams; 1815.
The text of 1836 returns to that of 1798.

[2] 1820.
In sleep did I behold the skies, 1798.

[3] 1827.
I saw the crackling flashes drive; 1798.
I heard, and saw the flashes drive; 1820.

No pleasure now, and no desire.
Then here contented will I lie!
Alone, I cannot fear to die.

III

Alas! ye[1] might have dragged me on
Another day, a single one!
Too soon I yielded to despair;
Why did ye listen to my prayer?[2]
When ye[3] were gone my limbs were stronger;
And oh, how grievously I rue,
That, afterwards, a little longer,
My friends, I did not follow you!
For strong and without pain I lay,
Dear friends, when ye[4] were gone away.

IV

My Child! they gave thee to another,
A woman who was not thy mother.
When from my arms my Babe they took,
On me how strangely did he look!
Through his whole body something ran,
A most strange working[5] did I see;
—As if he strove to be a man,
That he might pull the sledge for me:
And then he stretched his arms, how wild!
Oh mercy! like a helpless child.[6]

---

1 1815.
. . you . . . . . . 1798.

2 1815.
Too soon despair o'er me prevailed;
Too soon my heartless spirit failed; 1798.

3 1815.
. . you . . . . . . 1798.

4 1845.
My friends, when you . . . . 1798.
. . when ye . . . . 1815.

5 1815.
A most strange something . . . 1798.

6 1815.
. . . . a little child. 1798.

V

My little joy! my little pride!
In two days more I must have died.
Then do not weep and grieve for me;
I feel I must have died with thee.
O wind, that o'er my head art flying
The way my friends their course did bend,
I should not feel the pain of dying,
Could I with thee a message send;
Too soon, my friends, ye[1] went away;
For I had many things to say.

VI

I'll follow you across the snow;
Ye[2] travel heavily and slow;
In spite of all my weary pain
I'll look upon your tents again.
—My fire is dead, and snowy white
The water which beside it stood:
The wolf has come to me to-night,
And he has stolen away my food.
For ever left alone am I;
Then wherefore should I fear to die?

VII[3]

Young as I am, my course is run,[4]
I shall not see another sun;
I cannot lift my limbs to know
If they have any life or no.
My poor forsaken Child, if I
For once could have thee close to me,

---

[1] 1815.
. . . . you . . 1798.

[2] 1815.
You . . . . 1798.

[3] This stanza was omitted in the editions 1815 to 1832, but restored in 1836.

[4] 1836.
My journey will be shortly run, 1798.

With happy heart I then would die,
And my last thought would happy be ;[1]
But thou, dear Babe, art far away,
Nor shall I see another day.[2]

THE LAST OF THE FLOCK

Composed 1798.—Published 1798

[Produced at the same time as *The Complaint*, and for the same purpose. The incident occurred in the village of Holford, close by Alfoxden.—I. F.]

Included among the "Poems founded on the Affections."—Ed.

I

In distant countries have I been,[3]
And yet I have not often seen
A healthy man, a man full grown,
Weep in the public roads, alone.
But such a one, on English ground,
And in the broad highway, I met;
Along the broad highway he came,
His cheeks with tears were wet:
Sturdy he seemed, though he was sad;
And in his arms a Lamb he had.

II

He saw me, and he turned aside,
As if he wished himself to hide:

---

[1] 1836.
. . . I then would die,
And my last thoughts . . . 1798.
. . . I then should die, 1800.

[2] 1836.
I feel my body die away,
I shall not see another day. 1798.

[3] 1815.
. . . . I have been, 1798.

And with his coat did then essay[1]
To wipe those briny tears away.
I followed him, and said, "My friend,
What ails you? wherefore weep you so?"
—"Shame on me, Sir! this lusty Lamb,
He makes my tears to flow.
To-day I fetched him from the rock:
He is the last of all my flock.

III

"When I was young, a single man,
And after youthful follies ran,
Though little given to care and thought,
Yet, so it was, an ewe[2] I bought;
And other sheep from her I raised,
As healthy sheep as you might see;
And then I married, and was rich
As I could wish to be;
Of sheep I numbered a full score,
And every year increased my store.

IV

"Year after year my stock it grew;
And from this one, this single ewe,
Full fifty comely sheep I raised,
As fine[3] a flock as ever grazed!
Upon the Quantock hills they fed;[4]
They throve, and we at home did thrive:
—This lusty Lamb of all my store
Is all that is alive;
And now I care not if we die,
And perish all of poverty.

---

[1] 1836.
Then with his coat he made essay 1798.

[2] 1832.
. . . . a ewe . . 1798.

[3] 1836.
As sweet . . . . . . 1798.

[4] 1836.
Upon the mountain did they feed; 1798.

V

"Six[1] Children, Sir! had I to feed;
Hard labour in a time of need!
My pride was tamed, and in our grief
I of the Parish asked relief.
They said, I was a wealthy man;
My sheep upon the uplands[2] fed,
And it was fit that thence I took
Whereof to buy us bread.
'Do this: how can we give to you,'
They cried, 'what to the poor is due?'

VI

"I sold a sheep, as they had said,
And bought my little children bread,
And they were healthy with their food;
For me—it never did me good.
A woeful time it was for me,
To see the end of all my gains,
The pretty flock which I had reared
With all my care and pains,
To see it melt like snow away—
For me it was a woeful day.

VII

"Another still! and still another!
A little lamb, and then its mother!
It was a vein that never stopped—
Like blood-drops from my heart they dropped.
'Till thirty were not left alive
They dwindled, dwindled, one by one;
And I may say, that many a time
I wished they all were gone—

---

[1] 1800.
Ten . . . . 1798.

[2] 1836.
. . upon the mountain . 1798.

Reckless of what might come at last
Were but the bitter struggle past.[1]

VIII

"To wicked deeds I was inclined,
And wicked fancies crossed my mind;
And every man I chanced to see,
I thought he knew some ill of me:
No peace, no comfort could I find,
No ease, within doors or without;
And, crazily and wearily
I went my work about;
And oft was moved to flee from home,
And hide my head where wild beasts roam.[2]

IX

"Sir! 'twas a precious flock to me,
As dear as my own children be;
For daily with my growing store
I loved my children more and more.
Alas! it was an evil time;
God cursed me in my sore distress;
I prayed, yet every day I thought
I loved my children less;
And every week, and every day,
My flock it seemed to melt away.

X

"They dwindled, Sir, sad sight to see!
From ten to five, from five to three,

---

[1] 1827.
They dwindled one by one away;
For me it was a woeful day. 1798.

[2] 1836.
Oft-times I thought to run away;
For me it was a woeful day. 1798.

Bent oftentimes to flee from home,
And hide my head where wild beasts roam. 1827.

A lamb, a wether, and a ewe ;—
And then at last from three to two ;
And, of my fifty, yesterday
I had but only one :
And here it lies upon my arm,
Alas ! and I have none ;—
To-day I fetched it from the rock ;
It is the last of all my flock."

THE IDIOT BOY

Composed 1798.—Published 1798

[Alfoxden, 1798. The last stanza, 'The cocks did crow to-whoo, to-whoo, and the sun did shine so cold,' was the foundation of the whole. The words were reported to me by my dear friend Thomas Poole ; but I have since heard the same repeated of other idiots. Let me add, that this long poem was composed in the groves of Alfoxden, almost extempore ; not a word, I believe, being corrected, though one stanza was omitted. I mention this in gratitude to those happy moments, for, in truth, I never wrote anything with so much glee.—I. F.]

One of the "Poems founded on the Affections."—Ed.

'Tis eight o'clock,—a clear March night,
The moon is up,—the sky is blue,
The owlet, in the moonlight air,
Shouts from [1] nobody knows where ;
He lengthens out his lonely shout,
Halloo ! halloo ! a long halloo !

—Why bustle thus about your door,
What means this bustle, Betty Foy ?
Why are you in this mighty fret ?

[1] 1827.
He shouts from . . . . 1798.

And why on horseback have you set
Him whom you love, your Idiot Boy?[1]

Scarcely a soul is out of bed:[2]
Good Betty, put him down again;
His lips with joy they burr at you;
But, Betty! what has he to do
With stirrup, saddle, or with rein?[3]

But Betty's bent on her intent;
For her good neighbour, Susan Gale,
Old Susan, she who dwells alone,
Is sick, and makes a piteous moan,
As if her very life would fail.

There's not a house within a mile,
No hand to help them in distress;
Old Susan lies a-bed in pain,
And sorely puzzled are the twain,
For what she ails they cannot guess.

And Betty's husband's at the wood,
Where by the week he doth abide,
A woodman in the distant vale;
There's none to help poor Susan Gale;
What must be done? what will betide?

---

[1] Inserted in the editions 1798 to 1820.
Beneath the moon that shines so bright,
Till she is tired, let Betty Foy
With girt and stirrup fiddle-faddle;
But wherefore set upon a saddle
Him whom she loves, her idiot boy?

[2] 1836.
There's scarce a soul that's out of bed; 1798.

[3] Inserted in the editions 1798 to 1820.
The world will say 'tis very idle,
Bethink you of the time of night;
There's not a mother, no not one,
But when she hears what you have done,
Oh! Betty she'll be in a fright.

And Betty from the lane has fetched
Her Pony, that is mild and good;
Whether he be in joy or pain,
Feeding at will along the lane,
Or bringing faggots from the wood.

And he is all in travelling trim,—
And, by the moonlight, Betty Foy
Has on the well-girt saddle set [1]
(The like was never heard of yet)
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy.

And he must post without delay
Across the bridge and through the dale,[2]
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a Doctor from the town,
Or she will die, old Susan Gale.

There is no need of boot or spur,
There is no need of whip or wand;
For Johnny has his holly-bough,
And with a *hurly-burly* now
He shakes the green bough in his hand.

And Betty o'er and o'er has told
The Boy, who is her best delight,
Both what to follow, what to shun,
What do, and what to leave undone,
How turn to left, and how to right.

And Betty's most especial charge,
Was, "Johnny! Johnny! mind that you
Come home again, nor stop at all,—
Come home again, whate'er befal,
My Johnny, do, I pray you do."

---

[1] 1836.
Has up upon the saddle set, 1798.

[2] 1820.
. . . that's in the dale, 1798.

To this did Johnny answer make,
Both with his head and with his hand,
And proudly shook the bridle too;
And then! his words were not a few,
Which Betty well could understand.

And now that Johnny is just going,
Though Betty's in a mighty flurry,
She gently pats the Pony's side,
On which her Idiot Boy must ride,
And seems no longer in a hurry.

But when the Pony moved his legs,
Oh! then for the poor Idiot Boy!
For joy he cannot hold the bridle,
For joy his head and heels are idle,
He's idle all for very joy.

And while the Pony moves his legs,
In Johnny's left hand you may see
The green bough [1] motionless and dead:
The Moon that shines above his head
Is not more still and mute than he.

His heart it was so full of glee,
That till full fifty yards were gone,
He quite forgot his holly whip,
And all his skill in horsemanship:
Oh! happy, happy, happy John.

And while the Mother, at the door,
Stands fixed, her face with joy o'erflows [2]
Proud of herself, and proud of him,
She sees him in his travelling trim,
How quietly her Johnny goes.

---

[1] 1827.
. . bough's . . . . 1798.

[2] 1827.
And Betty's standing at the door,
And Betty's face with joy o'erflows, 1798.

The silence of her Idiot Boy,
What hopes it sends to Betty's heart!
He's at the guide-post—he turns right;
She watches till he's out of sight,
And Betty will not then depart.

Burr, burr—now Johnny's lips they burr,
As loud as any mill, or near it;
Meek as a lamb the Pony moves,
And Johnny makes the noise he loves,
And Betty listens, glad to hear it.

Away she hies to Susan Gale:
Her Messenger's in merry tune;[1]
The owlets hoot, the owlets curr,
And Johnny's lips they burr, burr, burr,
As[2] on he goes beneath the moon.

His steed and he right well agree;
For of this Pony there's a rumour,
That, should he lose his eyes and ears,
And should he live a thousand years,
He never will be out of humour.

But then he is a horse that thinks!
And when he thinks, his pace is slack;
Now, though he knows poor Johnny well,
Yet, for his life, he cannot tell
What he has got upon his back.

So through the moonlight lanes they go,
And far into the moonlight dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a Doctor from the town,
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

---

[1] 1820.
And Johnny's in a merry tune, 1798.

[2] 1827.
And . . . . 1798.

And Betty, now at Susan's side,
Is in the middle of her story,
What speedy help her Boy will bring,[1]
With many a most diverting thing,
Of Johnny's wit, and Johnny's glory.

And Betty, still at Susan's side,
By this time is not quite so flurried:[2]
Demure with porringer and plate
She sits, as if in Susan's fate
Her life and soul were buried.

But Betty, poor good woman! she,
You plainly in her face may read it,
Could lend out of that moment's store
Five years of happiness or more
To any that might need it.

But yet I guess that now and then
With Betty all was not so well;
And to the road she turns her ears,
And thence full many a sound she hears,
Which she to Susan will not tell.

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans;
"As sure as there's a moon in heaven,"
Cries Betty, "he'll be back again;
They'll both be here—'tis almost ten—
Both will be[3] here before eleven."

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans;
The clock gives warning for eleven;

---

[1] 1836.
What comfort Johnny soon will bring, 1798.
What comfort soon her Boy will bring, 1827.

[2] 1827.
And Betty's still at Susan's side:
By this time she's not quite so flurried; 1798.

[3] 1827.
They'll both be . . . . 1798.

'Tis on the stroke—"He must be near,"
Quoth Betty, "and will soon be here,[1]
As sure as there's a moon in heaven."

The clock is on the stroke of twelve,
And Johnny is not yet in sight:
—The Moon's in heaven, as Betty sees,
But Betty is not quite at ease;
And Susan has a dreadful night.

And Betty, half an hour ago,
On Johnny vile reflections cast:
"A little idle sauntering Thing!"
With other names, an endless string;
But now that time is gone and past.

And Betty's drooping at the heart,
That happy time all past and gone,
"How can it be he is so late?
The Doctor, he has made him wait;
Susan! they'll both be here anon."

And Susan's growing worse and worse,
And Betty's in a sad *quandary*;
And then there's nobody to say
If she must go, or she must stay!
—She's in a sad *quandary*.

The clock is on the stroke of one;
But neither Doctor nor his Guide
Appears[2] along the moonlight road;
There's neither horse nor man abroad,
And Betty's still at Susan's side.

---

[1] 1827.
'Tis on the stroke—"If Johnny's near,"
Quoth Betty, "he will soon be here," 1798.

[2] 1836.
Appear . . . . . . 1798.

And Susan now begins to fear[1]
Of sad mischances not a few,
That Johnny may perhaps be drowned;
Or lost, perhaps, and never found;
Which they must both for ever rue.

She prefaced half a hint of this
With, "God forbid it should be true!"
At the first word that Susan said
Cried Betty, rising from the bed,
"Susan, I'd gladly stay with you.

"I must be gone, I must away:
Consider, Johnny's but half-wise;
Susan, we must take care of him,
If he is hurt in life or limb"—
"Oh God forbid!" poor Susan cries.

"What can I do?" says Betty, going,
"What can I do to ease your pain?
Good Susan tell me, and I'll stay;
I fear you're in a dreadful way,
But I shall soon be back again."

"Nay, Betty,[2] go! good Betty, go!
There's nothing that can ease my pain."
Then off she hies; but with a prayer
That God poor Susan's life would spare,
Till she comes back again.

So, through the moonlight lane she goes,
And far into the moonlight dale;
And how she ran, and how she walked,
And all that to herself she talked,
Would surely be a tedious tale.

[1] 1827.
. . . she begins to fear 1798.

[2] 1800.
Good Betty * . . . . 1798.

* This change was made by S. T. C.—Ed.

In high and low, above, below,
In great and small, in round and square,
In tree and tower was Johnny seen,
In bush and brake, in black and green;
'Twas Johnny, Johnny, every where.

And while she crossed the bridge, there came
A thought with which her heart is sore—[1]
Johnny perhaps his horse forsook,
To hunt the moon within the brook,[2]
And never will be heard of more.

Now is she high[3] upon the down,
Alone amid a prospect wide;
There's neither Johnny nor his Horse
Among the fern or in the gorse;
There's neither Doctor nor his Guide.

"Oh saints! what is become of him?
Perhaps he's climbed into an oak,
Where he will stay till he is dead;
Or, sadly he has been misled,
And joined the wandering gipsy-folk.

"Or him that wicked Pony's carried
To the dark cave, the goblin's hall;
Or in the castle he's pursuing
Among the ghosts his own undoing;
Or playing with the waterfall."

---

[1] 1836.
She's past the bridge that's in the dale,
And now the thought torments her sore, 1798.
She's past the bridge far in the dale; 1820.
The bridge is past—far in the dale; 1827.

[2] 1827.
. . . . that's in the brook, 1798.

[3] 1827.
And now she's high . . . . 1798.

At poor old Susan then she railed,
While to the town she posts away;
"If Susan had not been so ill,
Alas! I should have had him still,
My Johnny, till my dying day."

Poor Betty, in this sad distemper,
The Doctor's self could[1] hardly spare:
Unworthy things she talked, and wild;
Even he, of cattle the most mild,
The Pony had his share.

But now she's fairly in the town,[2]
And to the Doctor's door she hies;
'Tis silence all on every side;
The town so long, the town so wide,
Is silent as the skies.

And now she's at the Doctor's door,
She lifts the knocker, rap, rap, rap;
The Doctor at the casement shows
His glimmering eyes that peep and doze!
And one hand rubs his old night-cap.

"Oh Doctor! Doctor! where's my Johnny?"
"I'm here, what is't you want with me?"
"Oh Sir! you know I'm Betty Foy,
And I have lost my poor dear Boy,
You know him—him you often see;

"He's not so wise as some folks be":
"The devil take his wisdom!" said
The Doctor, looking somewhat grim,
"What, Woman! should I know of him?"
And, grumbling, he went back to bed!

---

[1] 1827.
. . . would . . . . . 1798.

[2] 1836.
And now she's got into the town, 1798.

"O woe is me! O woe is me!
Here will I die; here will I die;
I thought to find my lost one here,[1]
But he is neither far nor near,
Oh! what a wretched Mother I!"

She stops, she stands, she looks about;
Which way to turn she cannot tell.
Poor Betty! it would ease her pain
If she had heart to knock again;
—The clock strikes three—a dismal knell!

Then up along the town she hies,
No wonder if her senses fail;
This piteous news so much it shocked her,
She quite forgot to send the Doctor,
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And now she's high upon the down,
And she can see a mile of road:
"O cruel! I'm almost threescore;
Such night as this was ne'er before,
There's not a single soul abroad."

She listens, but she cannot hear
The foot of horse, the voice of man;
The streams with softest sound are flowing,
The grass you almost hear it growing,
You hear it now, if e'er you can.

The owlets through the long blue night
Are shouting to each other still:
Fond lovers! yet not quite hob nob,
They lengthen out the tremulous sob,
That echoes far from hill to hill.

---

[1] 1827.
. . . my Johnny here, 1798.

Poor Betty now has lost all hope,
Her thoughts are bent on deadly sin,
A green-grown pond she just has past,
And from the brink she hurries fast,
Lest she should drown herself therein.

And now she sits her down and weeps;
Such tears she never shed before;
"Oh dear, dear Pony! my sweet joy!
Oh carry back my Idiot Boy!
And we will ne'er o'erload thee more."

A thought is come into her head:
The Pony he is mild and good,
And we have always used him well;
Perhaps he's gone along the dell,
And carried Johnny to the wood.

Then up she springs as if on wings;
She thinks no more of deadly sin;
If Betty fifty ponds should see,
The last of all her thoughts would be
To drown herself therein.

O Reader! now that I might tell
What Johnny and his Horse are doing!
What they've been doing all this time,
Oh could I put it into rhyme,
A most delightful tale pursuing!

Perhaps, and no unlikely thought!
He with his Pony now doth roam
The cliffs and peaks so high that are,
To lay his hands upon a star,
And in his pocket bring it home.

Perhaps he's turned himself about,
His face unto his horse's tail,
And, still and mute, in wonder lost,

All silent as a horseman-ghost,
He travels slowly down the vale.[1]

And now, perhaps, is hunting[2] sheep,
A fierce and dreadful hunter he;
Yon valley, now so trim[3] and green,
In five months' time, should he be seen,
A desert wilderness will be!

Perhaps, with head and heels on fire,
And like the very soul of evil,
He's galloping away, away,
And so will gallop[4] on for aye,
The bane of all that dread the devil!

I to the Muses have been bound
These fourteen years, by strong indentures: *
O gentle Muses! let me tell
But half of what to him befel;
He surely met[5] with strange adventures.

O gentle Muses! is this kind?
Why will ye thus my suit repel?
Why of your further aid bereave me?
And can ye thus unfriended[6] leave me;
Ye Muses! whom I love so well?

---

[1] 1836.
All like a silent horseman-ghost,
He travels on along the vale. 1798.

[2] 1820.
. . . . . he's hunting . . 1798.

[3] 1820.
. . that's so trim . . . . . 1798.

[4] 1827.
. . he'll gallop . . . . . 1798.

[5] 1802.
For sure he met . . . . . . 1798.

[6] 1798.
. . . . unfriendly . .
Only in MS. and in the edition of 1805.

---

* As Wordsworth gives the date of this poem as 1798, the above line implies that his poetical work began at least in 1784, when he was fourteen years of age. The note to *An Evening Walk* dictated to Miss Fenwick (see p. 5) implies the same.—ED.

Who's yon, that, near the waterfall,
Which thunders down with headlong force
Beneath the moon, yet shining fair,
As careless as if nothing were,
Sits upright on a feeding horse?

Unto his horse—there feeding[1] free,
He seems, I think, the rein to give;
Of moon or stars he takes no heed;
Of such we in romances read:
—'Tis Johnny! Johnny! as I live.

And that's the very Pony, too!
Where is she, where is Betty Foy?
She hardly can sustain her fears;
The roaring waterfall she hears,
And cannot find her Idiot Boy.

Your Pony's worth his weight in gold:
Then calm your terrors, Betty Foy!
She's coming from among the trees,
And now all full in view she sees
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy.

And Betty sees the Pony too:
Why stand you thus, good Betty Foy?
It is no goblin, 'tis no ghost,
'Tis he whom you so long have lost,
He whom you love, your Idiot Boy.

She looks again—her arms are up—
She screams—she cannot move for joy;
She darts, as with a torrent's force,
She almost has o'erturned the Horse,
And fast she holds her Idiot Boy.

---

[1] 1827.
. . . . that's feeding . 1798.

And Johnny burrs, and laughs aloud ;
Whether in cunning or in joy
I cannot tell ; but while he laughs,
Betty a drunken pleasure quaffs
To hear again her Idiot Boy.

And now she's at the Pony's tail,
And now is [1] at the Pony's head,—
On that side now, and now on this ;
And, almost stifled with her bliss,
A few sad tears does Betty shed.

She kisses o'er and o'er again
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy ;
She's happy here, is happy there,[2]
She is uneasy every where ;
Her limbs are all alive with joy.

She pats the Pony, where or when
She knows not, happy Betty Foy!
The little Pony glad may be,
But he is milder far than she,
You hardly can perceive his joy.

"Oh! Johnny, never mind the Doctor ;
You've done your best, and that is all : "
She took the reins, when this was said,
And gently turned the Pony's head
From the loud waterfall.

By this the stars were almost gone,
The moon was setting on the hill,
So pale you scarcely looked at her :
The little birds began to stir,
Though yet their tongues were still.

---

[1] 1827.
And now she's . . . . . 1798.

[2] 1827.
. . . she's happy there, 1798.

The Pony, Betty, and her Boy,
Wind slowly through the woody dale;
And who is she, betimes abroad,
That hobbles up the steep rough road?
Who is it, but old Susan Gale?

Long time lay Susan lost in thought;[1]
And many dreadful fears beset her,
Both for her Messenger and Nurse;
And, as her mind grew worse and worse,
Her body—it grew better.

She turned, she tossed herself in bed,
On all sides doubts and terrors met her;
Point after point did she discuss;
And, while her mind was fighting thus,
Her body still grew better.

"Alas! what is become of them?
These fears can never be endured;
I'll to the wood."—The word scarce said,
Did Susan rise up from her bed,
As if by magic cured.

Away she goes[2] up hill and down,
And to the wood at length is come;
She spies her Friends, she shouts a greeting;
Oh me! it is a merry meeting
As ever was in Christendom.

The owls have hardly sung their last,
While our four travellers homeward wend;
The owls have hooted all night long,
And with the owls began my song,
And with the owls must end.

---

[1] 1827.
Long Susan lay deep lost in thought, 1798.

[2] 1836.
. . she posts . . . . 1798.

For while they all were travelling home,
Cried Betty, "Tell us, Johnny, do,
Where all this long night you have been,
What you have heard, what you have seen:
And, Johnny, mind you tell us true."

Now Johnny all night long had heard
The owls in tuneful concert strive;
No doubt too he the moon had seen;
For in the moonlight he had been
From eight o'clock till five.

And thus, to Betty's question, he
Made answer, like a traveller bold,
(His very words I give to you,)
"The cocks did crow to-whoo, to-whoo,
And the sun did shine so cold!"
—Thus answered Johnny in his glory,
And that was all his travel's story.

THE OLD CUMBERLAND BEGGAR *

Composed 1798.—Published 1800

The class of Beggars to which the old man here described belongs, will probably soon be extinct. It consisted of poor, and, mostly, old and infirm persons, who confined themselves to a stated round in their neighbourhood, and had certain fixed days, on which, at different houses, they regularly received charity; sometimes in money, but mostly in provisions.—W. W. 1800.

[Observed, and with great benefit to my own heart, when I was a child. Written at Racedown and Alfoxden in my twenty-third year. † The Political Economists were about that time beginning their war upon mendicity in all its forms, and by implication, if not directly, on alms-giving also. This

* In an early MS. the title of this poem is *Description of a Beggar*, and in the editions 1800 to 1820 the title was *The Old Cumberland Beggar, a Description*.—ED.

† Wordsworth went to Racedown in 1795, when he was twenty-five years of age; and was at Alfoxden in his twenty-eighth year.—ED.

heartless process has been carried as far as it can go by the AMENDED Poor Law Bill, tho' the inhumanity that prevails in this measure is somewhat disguised by the profession that one of its objects is to throw the poor upon the voluntary donations of their neighbours; that is, if rightly interpreted, to force them into a condition between relief in the Union Poor House and alms robbed of their Christian grace and spirit, as being *forced* rather from the benevolent than given by them; while the avaricious and selfish, and all, in fact, but the humane and charitable, are at liberty to keep all they possess from their distressed brethren.—I. F.]

Included among the "Poems referring to the Period of Old Age."—ED.

I SAW an aged Beggar in my walk;
And he was seated, by the highway side,
On a low structure of rude masonry
Built at the foot of a huge hill, that they
Who lead their horses down the steep rough road
May thence remount at ease. The aged Man
Had placed his staff across the broad smooth stone
That overlays the pile; and, from a bag
All white with flour, the dole of village dames,
He drew his scraps and fragments, one by one;
And scanned them with a fixed and serious look
Of idle computation. In the sun,
Upon the second step of that small pile,
Surrounded by those wild unpeopled hills,
He sat, and ate[1] his food in solitude:
And ever, scattered from his palsied hand,
That, still attempting to prevent the waste,
Was baffled still, the crumbs in little showers
Fell on the ground; and the small mountain birds,
Not venturing yet to peck their destined meal,
Approached within the length of half his staff.

Him from my childhood have I known; and then
He was so old, he seems not older now;

[1] 1805.
. . . . eat . . . . 1800.

He travels on, a solitary Man,
So helpless in appearance, that for him
The sauntering Horseman throws not with a slack
And careless hand[1] his alms upon the ground,
But stops,—that he may safely lodge the coin
Within the old Man's hat; nor quits him so,
But still, when he has given his horse the rein,
Watches the aged Beggar with a look[2]
Sidelong, and half-reverted. She who tends
The toll-gate, when in summer at her door
She turns her wheel, if on the road she sees
The aged beggar coming, quits her work,
And lifts the latch for him that he may pass.
The post-boy, when his rattling wheels o'ertake
The aged Beggar in the woody lane,
Shouts to him from behind; and, if thus warned[3]
The old man does not change his course, the boy
Turns with less noisy wheels to the roadside,
And passes gently by, without a curse
Upon his lips, or anger at his heart.

He travels on, a solitary Man;
His age has no companion. On the ground
His eyes are turned, and, as he moves along,
They move along the ground; and, evermore,
Instead of common and habitual sight
Of fields with rural works, of hill and dale,
And the blue sky, one little span of earth
Is all his prospect. Thus, from day to day,
Bow-bent, his eyes for ever on the ground,[4]

[1] 1837.
The sauntering horseman-traveller does not throw
With careless hand . . . . . . 1800.

[2] 1827.
Towards the aged Beggar turns a look, 1800.

[3] 1827.
. . . . . and, if perchance 1800.

[4] 1800.
. . . . . . and, evermore,
Instead of Nature's fair variety,

He plies his weary journey; seeing still,
And seldom [1] knowing that he sees, some straw,
Some scattered leaf, or marks which, in one track,
The nails of cart or chariot-wheel have left
Impressed on the white road,—in the same line,
At distance still the same. Poor Traveller!
His staff trails with him; scarcely do his feet [2]
Disturb the summer dust; he is so still
In look and motion, that the cottage curs,[3]
Ere he has [4] passed the door, will turn away,
Weary of barking at him. Boys and girls,
The vacant and the busy, maids and youths,
And urchins newly breeched—all pass him by:
Him even the slow-paced waggon leaves behind.

But deem not this Man useless.—Statesmen! ye
Who are so restless in your wisdom, ye
Who have a broom still ready in your hands
To rid the world of nuisances; ye proud,
Heart-swoln, while in your pride ye contemplate
Your talents, power, or [5] wisdom, deem him not
A burthen of the earth! 'Tis nature's law

Her ample scope of hill and dale, of clouds
And the blue sky, the same short span of earth
Is all his prospect. When the little birds
Flit over him, if their quick shadows strike
Across his path, he does not lift his head
Like one whose thoughts have been unsettled. So
Brow-bent, his eyes for ever . . . MS.

[1] 1827.
And never . . . . 1800.

[2] 1800.
. . . his slow footsteps scarce MS.

[3] 1800.
. . . . . that the miller's dog
Is tired of barking at him. MS.

[4] 1837.
. . have . . . . 1800.

[5] 1837.
. . . and . . . . . 1800.

That none, the meanest of created things,
Of forms created the most vile and brute,
The dullest or most noxious, should exist
Divorced from good—a spirit and pulse of good,
A life and soul, to every mode of being
Inseparably linked. Then be assured
That least of all can aught—that ever owned
The heaven-regarding eye and front sublime *
Which man is born to—sink, howe'er depressed,
So low as to be scorned without a sin;
Without offence to God cast out of view;
Like the dry remnant of a garden-flower
Whose seeds are shed, or as an implement
Worn out and worthless.[1] While from door to door
This old Man creeps,[2] the villagers in him
Behold a record which together binds
Past deeds and offices of charity,
Else unremembered, and so keeps alive
The kindly mood in hearts which lapse of years,
And that half-wisdom half-experience gives,
Make slow to feel, and by sure steps resign
To selfishness and cold oblivious cares.
Among the farms and solitary huts,
Hamlets and thinly-scattered villages,
Where'er the aged Beggar takes his rounds,
The mild necessity of use compels
To acts of love; and habit does the work
Of reason; yet prepares that after-joy
Which reason cherishes. And thus the soul,
By that sweet taste of pleasure unpursued

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[1] The lines from "Then be assured" to "worthless" were added in the edition of 1837.

[2] 1837.

. . . . While thus he creeps
From door to door, ... 1800.

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* Compare Ovid's *Metamorphoses* i. 84:

Os homini sublime dedit, coelumque videre
Jussit et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus.—Ed.

Doth find herself[1] insensibly disposed
To virtue and true goodness.
Some there are,
By their good works exalted, lofty minds
And meditative, authors of delight
And happiness, which to the end of time
Will live, and spread, and kindle: even such minds[2]
In childhood, from this solitary Being,
Or from like wanderer, haply have received[3]
(A thing more precious far than all that books
Or the solicitudes of love can do!)
That first mild touch of sympathy and thought,
In which they found their kindred with a world
Where want and sorrow were. The easy man
Who sits at his own door,—and, like the pear
That[4] overhangs his head from the green wall,
Feeds in the sunshine; the robust and young,
The prosperous and unthinking, they who live
Sheltered, and flourish in a little grove
Of their own kindred;—all behold in him
A silent monitor, which on their minds
Must needs impress a transitory thought
Of self-congratulation, to the heart
Of each recalling his peculiar boons,
His charters and exemptions; and, perchance,
Though he to no one give the fortitude
And circumspection needful to preserve
His present blessings, and to husband up
The respite of the season, he, at least,
And 'tis no vulgar service, makes them felt.

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[1] 1832.
. . . . . itself . . . . 1800.

[2] 1827.
. . . . . . ; minds like these, 1800.

[3] 1827.
This helpless wanderer, have perchance receiv'd, 1800.

[4] 1827.
Which . . . . 1800.

Yet further.——Many, I believe, there are
Who live a life of virtuous decency,
Men who can hear the Decalogue and feel
No self-reproach; who of the moral law
Established in the land where they abide
Are strict observers; and not negligent
In acts of love to those with whom they dwell,[1]
Their kindred, and the children of their blood.
Praise be to such, and to their slumbers peace!
—But of the poor man ask, the abject poor;
Go, and demand of him, if there be here
In this cold abstinence from evil deeds,
And these inevitable charities,
Wherewith to satisfy the human soul?
No—man is dear to man; the poorest poor
Long for some moments in a weary life
When they can know and feel that they have been,
Themselves, the fathers and the dealers-out
Of some small blessings; have been kind to such
As needed kindness, for this single cause,
That we have all of us one human heart.
—Such pleasure is to one kind Being known,
My neighbour, when with punctual care, each week
Duly as Friday comes, though pressed herself
By her own wants, she from her store[2] of meal
Takes one unsparing handful for the scrip
Of this old Mendicant, and, from her door
Returning with exhilarated heart,
Sits by her fire, and builds her hope in heaven.

Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
And while in that vast solitude to which

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[1] 1827.

. . . . . and not negligent,
Meanwhile, in any tenderness of heart
Or act of love . . . . 1800.

[2] 1827.

. . . . chest . . . 1800.

The tide of things has borne[1] him, he appears
To breathe and live but for himself alone,
Unblamed, uninjured, let him bear about
The good which the benignant law of Heaven
Has hung around him: and, while life is his,
Still let him prompt the unlettered villagers
To tender offices and pensive thoughts.*
—Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
And, long as he can wander, let him breathe
The freshness of the valleys; let his blood
Struggle with frosty air and winter snows;
And let the chartered wind that sweeps the heath
Beat his grey locks against his withered face.
Reverence the hope whose vital anxiousness
Gives the last human interest to his heart.
May never HOUSE, misnamed of INDUSTRY,
Make him a captive!—for that pent-up din,
Those life-consuming sounds that clog the air,
Be his the natural silence of old age!
Let him be free of mountain solitudes;
And have around him, whether heard or not,
The pleasant melody of woodland birds.
Few are his pleasures: if his eyes have now
Been doomed so long to settle upon earth
That not without some effort they behold
The countenance of the horizontal sun,[2]

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[1] 1827.
. . . . . led . . . . . 1800.

[2] 1837.
. . . . . if his eyes, which now
Have been so long familiar with the earth,
No more behold the horizontal sun 1800.
. . . . . if his eyes have now
Been doomed so long to settle on the earth
That not without some effort they behold
The countenance of the horizontal sun, 1815.

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* With this poem compare Frederick William Faber's "Hymn," which he called *The Old Labourer*, beginning—
What end doth he fulfil?
He seems without a will.—ED.

Rising or setting, let the light at least
Find a free entrance to their languid orbs.
And let him, *where* and *when* he will, sit down
Beneath the trees, or on a[1] grassy bank
Of highway side, and with the little birds
Share his chance-gathered meal; and, finally,
As in the eye of Nature he has lived,
So in the eye of Nature let him die! *

ANIMAL TRANQUILLITY AND DECAY

Composed 1798.—Published 1798

[If I recollect right, these verses were an overflowing from *The Old Cumberland Beggar.*—I. F.]

They were published in the first edition of "Lyrical Ballads" (1798), but *The Old Cumberland Beggar* was not published till 1800. In an early MS., however, the two are incorporated.

In the edition of 1798, the poem was called, *Old Man Travelling; Animal Tranquillity and Decay, a Sketch.* In 1800, the title was *Animal Tranquillity and Decay. A Sketch.* In 1845, it was *Animal Tranquillity and Decay.*

It was included among the "Poems referring to the Period of Old Age."—ED.

THE little hedgerow birds,
That peck along the road, regard him not.
He travels on, and in his face, his step,
His gait, is one expression: every limb,
His look and bending figure, all bespeak
A man who does not move with pain, but moves
With thought.—He is insensibly subdued

[1] 1837.
. . . . or by the . . 1800.

* In January 1801 Charles Lamb thus wrote to Wordsworth of his *Old Cumberland Beggar:* "It appears to me a fault that the instructions conveyed in it are too direct, and like a lecture: they don't slide into the mind of the reader while he is imagining no such matter." At the same time he refers to "the delicate and curious feeling in the wish of the Beggar that he may have about him the melody of birds, although he hears them not." (*The Letters of Charles Lamb*, edited by Alfred Ainger, vol. i. p. 163.)—ED.

To settled quiet: he is one by whom
All effort seems forgotten; one to whom
Long patience hath[1] such mild composure given,
That patience now doth seem a thing of which
He hath no need. He is by nature led
To peace so perfect that the young behold
With envy, what the Old Man hardly feels.[2]

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[1] 1805.
. . . . has . . . . 1798.

[2] 1815.
—I asked him whither he was bound, and what
The object of his journey; he replied
"Sir! I am going many miles to take
A last leave of my son, a mariner,
Who from a sea-fight has been brought to Falmouth,
And there is dying in an hospital." 1798.

. . . . . he replied
That he was going many miles to take
A last leave of his son, a mariner,
Who from a sea-fight had been brought to Falmouth,
And there was dying* in an hospital. 1800 to 1805.

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* The edition of 1800 has "lying," evidently a misprint.—Ed.

APPENDIX

I

The following is the full text of the original edition of *Descriptive Sketches*, first published in 1793:—

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES. | IN VERSE. | TAKEN DURING A | PEDESTRIAN TOUR | IN THE | ITALIAN, GRISON, SWISS, AND SAVOYARD | ALPS. | BY | W. WORDSWORTH, B.A. | OF ST. JOHN'S, CAMBRIDGE. | "LOCA PASTORUM DESERTA ATQUE OTIA DIA." | *Lucret.* | "CASTELLA IN TUMULIS — | ET LONGE SALTUS LATEQUE VACANTES." | *Virgil.* | LONDON: | PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD. | 1793.

TO THE REV. ROBERT JONES, FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

DEAR SIR, However desirous I might have been of giving you proofs of the high place you hold in my esteem, I should have been cautious of wounding your delicacy by thus publicly addressing you, had not the circumstance of my having accompanied you amongst the Alps, seemed to give this dedication a propriety sufficient to do away any scruples which your modesty might otherwise have suggested.

In inscribing this little work to you I consult my heart. You know well how great is the difference between two companions lolling in a post chaise, and two travellers plodding slowly along the road, side by side, each with his little knapsack of necessaries upon his shoulders. How much more of heart between the two latter!

I am happy in being conscious I shall have one reader who will approach the conclusion of these few pages with regret. You they must certainly interest, in reminding you of moments

to which you can hardly look back without a pleasure not the less dear from a shade of melancholy. You will meet with few images without recollecting the spot where we observed them together, consequently, whatever is feeble in my design, or spiritless in my colouring, will be amply supplied by your own memory.

With still greater propriety I might have inscribed to you a description of some of the features of your native mountains, through which we have wandered together, in the same manner, with so much pleasure. But the sea-sunsets which give such splendour to the vale of Clwyd, Snowdon, the chair of Idris, the quiet village of Bethkelert, Menai and her druids, the Alpine steeps of the Conway, and the still more interesting windings of the wizard stream of the Dee remain yet untouched. Apprehensive that my pencil may never be exercised on these subjects, I cannot let slip this opportunity of thus publicly assuring you with how much affection and esteem,

I am Dear Sir,
Your most obedient very humble Servant
W. WORDSWORTH.

ARGUMENT

Happiness (if she had been to be found on Earth) amongst the Charms of Nature—Pleasures of the pedestrian Traveller—Author crosses France to the Alps—Present state of the Grande Chartreuse —Lake of Como—Time, Sunset—Same Scene, Twilight—Same Scene, Morning, it's Voluptuous Character; Old Man and Forest Cottage Music—River Tusa—Via Mala and Grison Gypsey. Valley of Sckellenen-thal—Lake of Uri. Stormy Sunset—Chapel of William Tell—force of Local Emotion—Chamois Chaser—View of the higher Alps—Manner of Life of a Swiss Mountaineer interspersed with views of the higher Alps—Golden Age of the Alps —Life and Views continued—Ranz des Vaches famous Swiss Air —Abbey of Einsiedlen and it's Pilgrims—Valley of Chamouny—Mont Blanc—Slavery of Savoy—Influence of Liberty on Cottage Happiness—France—Wish for the extirpation of Slavery—Conclusion.

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES *

WERE there, below, a spot of holy ground,
By Pain and her sad family unfound,
Sure, Nature's GOD that spot to man had giv'n,

* All the notes to this reprint of the edition of 1793 are Wordsworth's own, as given in that edition.—ED.

Where murmuring rivers join the song of ev'n;
Where falls the purple morning far and wide
In flakes of light upon the mountain-side;
Where summer Suns in ocean sink to rest,
Or moonlight Upland lifts her hoary breast;
Where Silence, on her night of wing, o'er-broods
Unfathom'd dells and undiscover'd woods;
Where rocks and groves the power of waters shakes
In cataracts, or sleeps in quiet lakes.
  But doubly pitying Nature loves to show'r
Soft on his wounded heart her healing pow'r,
Who plods o'er hills and vales his road forlorn,
Wooing her varying charms from eve to morn.
No sad vacuities his heart annoy,
Blows not a Zephyr but it whispers joy;
For him lost flowers their idle sweets exhale;
He tastes the meanest note that swells the gale;
For him sod-seats the cottage-door adorn,
And peeps the far-off spire, his evening bourn!
Dear is the forest frowning o'er his head,
And dear the green-sward to his velvet tread;
Moves there a cloud o'er mid-day's flaming eye?
Upward he looks—and calls it luxury;
Kind Nature's charities his steps attend,
In every babbling brook he finds a friend,
While chast'ning thoughts of sweetest use, bestow'd
By Wisdom, moralize his pensive road.
Host of his welcome inn, the noon-tide bow'r,
To his spare meal he calls the passing poor;
He views the Sun uprear his golden fire,
Or sink, with heart alive like * Memnon's lyre;
Blesses the Moon that comes with kindest ray
To light him shaken by his viewless way.
With bashful fear no cottage children steal
From him, a brother at the cottage meal,
His humble looks no shy restraint impart,
Around him plays at will the virgin heart.
While unsuspended wheels the village dance,
The maidens eye him with inquiring glance,
Much wondering what sad stroke of crazing Care
Or desperate Love could lead a wanderer there.

* The lyre of Memnon is reported to have emitted melancholy or chearful tones, as it was touched by the sun's evening or morning rays.

Me, lur'd by hope her sorrows to remove,
A heart, that could not much itself approve,
O'er Gallia's wastes of corn dejected led,
*Her road elms rustling thin above my head,
Or through her truant pathway's native charms,
By secret villages and lonely farms,
To where the Alps, ascending white in air,
Toy with the Sun, and glitter from afar.
Ev'n now I sigh at hoary Chartreuse' doom
Weeping beneath his chill of mountain gloom.
Where now is fled that Power whose frown severe
Tam'd "sober Reason" till she crouch'd in fear?
That breath'd a death-like peace these woods around
Broke only by th' unvaried torrent's sound,
Or prayer-bell by the dull cicada drown'd.
The cloister startles at the gleam of arms,
And Blasphemy the shuddering fane alarms;
Nod the cloud-piercing pines their troubl'd heads,
Spires, rocks, and lawns, a browner night o'erspreads.
Strong terror checks the female peasant's sighs,
And start th' astonish'd shades at female eyes.
The thundering tube the aged angler hears,
And swells the groaning torrent with his tears.
From Bruno's forest screams the frighted jay,
And slow th' insulted eagle wheels away.
The cross with hideous laughter Demons mock,
By † angels planted on the aëreal rock.
The "parting Genius" sighs with hollow breath
Along the mystic streams of ‡ Life and Death.
Swelling the outcry dull, that long resounds
Portentous, thro' her old woods' trackless bounds,
Deepening her echoing torrents' awful peal
And bidding paler shades her form conceal,
§Vallombre, mid her falling fanes, deplores,
For ever broke, the sabbath of her bow'rs.
More pleas'd, my foot the hidden margin roves
Of Como bosom'd deep in chesnut groves.
No meadows thrown between, the giddy steeps

* There are few people whom it may be necessary to inform, that the sides of many of the post-roads in France are planted with a row of trees.

† Alluding to crosses seen on the tops of the spiry rocks of the Chartreuse, which have every appearance of being inaccessible.

‡ Names of rivers at the Chartreuse.

§ Name of one of the vallies of the Chartreuse.

Tower, bare or sylvan, from the narrow deeps.
To towns, whose shades of no rude sound complain,
To ringing team unknown and grating wain,
To flat-roof'd towns, that touch the water's bound,
Or lurk in woody sunless glens profound,
Or from the bending rocks obtrusive cling,
And o'er the whiten'd wave their shadows fling;
Wild round the steeps the little * pathway twines,
And Silence loves it's purple roof of vines.
The viewless lingerer hence, at evening, sees
From rock-hewn steps the sail between the trees;
Or marks, mid opening cliffs, fair dark-ey'd maids
Tend the small harvest of their garden glades,
Or, led by distant warbling notes, surveys,
With hollow ringing ears and darkening gaze,
Binding the charmed soul in powerless trance,
Lip-dewing Song and ringlet-tossing Dance,
Where sparkling eyes and breaking smiles illume
The bosom'd cabin's lyre-enliven'd gloom;
Or stops the solemn mountain-shades to view
Stretch, o'er their pictur'd mirror, broad and blue,
Tracking the yellow sun from steep to steep,
As up th' opposing hills, with tortoise foot, they creep.
Here half a village shines, in gold array'd,
Bright as the moon, half hides itself in shade.
From the dark sylvan roofs the restless spire
Inconstant glancing, mounts like springing fire.
There, all unshaded, blazing forests throw
Rich golden verdure on the waves below.
Slow glides the sail along th' illumin'd shore,
And steals into the shade the lazy oar.
Soft bosoms breathe around contagious sighs,
And amourous music on the water dies.
Heedless how Pliny, musing here, survey'd
Old Roman boats and figures thro' the shade,
Pale Passion, overpower'd, retires and woos
The thicket, where th' unlisten'd stock-dove coos.
  How bless'd, delicious Scene! the eye that greets
Thy open beauties, or thy lone retreats;

* If any of my readers should ever visit the Lake of Como, I recommend it to him to take a stroll along this charming little pathway: he must chuse the evening, as it is on the western side of the Lake. We pursued it from the foot of the water to it's head: it is once interrupted by a ferry.

Th' unwearied sweep of wood thy cliffs that scales,
The never-ending waters of thy vales;
The cots, those dim religious groves enbow'r,
Or, under rocks that from the water tow'r
Insinuated, sprinkling all the shore,
Each with his household boat beside the door,
Whose flaccid sails in forms fantastic droop,
Bright'ning the gloom where thick the forests stoop;
—Thy torrents shooting from the clear-blue sky,
Thy towns, like swallows' nests that cleave on high;
That glimmer hoar in eve's last light, descry'd
Dim from the twilight water's shaggy side,
Whence lutes and voices down th' enchanted woods
Steal, and compose the oar-forgotten floods,
While Evening's solemn bird melodious weeps,
Heard, by star-spotted bays, beneath the steeps;
—Thy lake, mid smoking woods, that blue and grey
Gleams, streak'd or dappled, hid from morning's ray
Slow-travelling down the western hills, to fold
It's green-ting'd margin in a blaze of gold;
From thickly-glittering spires the matin-bell
Calling the woodman from his desert cell,
A summons to the sound of oars, that pass,
Spotting the steaming deeps, to early mass;
Slow swells the service o'er the water born,
While fill each pause the ringing woods of morn.
  Farewel! those forms that, in thy noon-tide shade,
Rest, near their little plots of wheaten glade;
Those stedfast eyes, that beating breasts inspire
To throw the "sultry ray" of young Desire;
Those lips, whose tides of fragrance come, and go,
Accordant to the cheek's unquiet glow;
Those shadowy breasts in love's soft light array'd,
And rising, by the moon of passion sway'd.
  —Thy fragrant gales and lute-resounding streams,
Breathe o'er the failing soul voluptuous dreams;
While Slavery, forcing the sunk mind to dwell
On joys that might disgrace the captive's cell,
Her shameless timbrel shakes along thy marge,
And winds between thine isles the vocal barge.
  Yet, arts are thine that rock th' unsleeping heart,
And smiles to Solitude and Want impart.
I lov'd, mid thy most desert woods astray,

With pensive step to measure my slow way,*
By lonely, silent cottage-doors to roam,
The far-off peasant's day-deserted home;
Once did I pierce to where a cabin stood,
The red-breast peace had bury'd it in wood,
There, by the door a hoary-headed sire
Touch'd with his wither'd hand an aged lyre;
Beneath an old-grey oak as violets lie,
Stretch'd at his feet with stedfast, upward eye,
His children's children join'd the holy sound,
A hermit—with his family around.
  Hence shall we seek where fair Locarno smiles
Embower'd in walnut slopes and citron isles,
Or charms that smile on Tusa's evening stream,
While mid dim towers and woods her † waters gleam;
From the bright wave, in solemn gloom, retire
The dull-red steeps, and darkening still, aspire,
To where afar rich orange lustres glow
Round undistinguish'd clouds, and rocks, and snow;
Or, led where Viamala's chasms confine
Th' indignant waters of the infant Rhine,
Bend o'er th' abyss?—the else impervious gloom
His burning eyes with fearful light illume.
The Grison gypsey here her tent has plac'd,
Sole human tenant of the piny waste;
Her tawny skin, dark eyes, and glossy locks,
Bend o'er the smoke that curls beneath the rocks.

  —The mind condemn'd, without reprieve, to go
O'er life's long deserts with it's charge of woe,
With sad congratulation joins the train,
Where beasts and men together o'er the plain
Move on,—a mighty caravan of pain;
Hope, strength, and courage, social suffering brings,
Freshening the waste of sand with shades and springs.
  —She solitary through the desert drear
Spontaneous wanders, hand in hand with Fear.
  A giant moan along the forest swells
Protracted, and the twilight storm foretells,

* Solo, e pensoso i più deserti campi
Vò misurando à passi tardi, e lenti.—*Petrarch*.

† The river along whose banks you descend in crossing the Alps by the Semplon pass. From the striking contrast of it's features, this pass I should imagine to be the most interesting among the Alps.

And, ruining from the cliffs their deafening load
Tumbles, the wildering Thunder slips abroad;
On the high summits Darkness comes and goes,
Hiding their fiery clouds, their rocks, and snows;
The torrent, travers'd by the lustre broad,
Starts like a horse beside the flashing road;
In the roof'd * bridge, at that despairing hour,
She seeks a shelter from the battering show'r.
—Fierce comes the river down; the crashing wood
Gives way, and half it's pines torment the flood;
†Fearful, beneath, the Water-spirits call,
And the bridge vibrates, tottering to its fall.
—Heavy, and dull, and cloudy is the night,
No star supplies the comfort of it's light,
Glimmer the dim-lit Alps, dilated, round,
And one sole light shifts in the vale profound;
While, opposite, the waning moon hangs still,
And red, above her melancholy hill.
By the deep quiet gloom appall'd, she sighs,
Stoops her sick head, and shuts her weary eyes.
—Breaking th' ascending roar of desert floods,
And insect buzz, that stuns the sultry woods,
She hears, upon the mountain forest's brow,
The death-dog, howling loud and long, below;
On viewless fingers counts the valley-clock,
Followed by drowsy crow of midnight cock.
—Bursts from the troubl'd Larch's giant boughs
The pie, and chattering breaks the night's repose.
Low barks the fox; by Havoc rouz'd the bear,
Quits, growling, the white bones that strew his lair;
The dry leaves stir as with the serpent's walk,
And, far beneath, Banditti voices talk;
Behind her hill the Moon, all crimson, rides,
And his red eyes the slinking Water hides;
Then all is hush'd; the bushes rustle near,
And with strange tinglings sings her fainting ear.
—Vex'd by the darkness, from the piny gulf
Ascending, nearer howls the famish'd wolf,

* Most of the bridges among the Alps are of wood and covered: these bridges have a heavy appearance, and rather injure the effect of the scenery in some places.

† "Red came the river down, and loud, and oft
The angry Spirit of the water shriek'd."—HOME'S *Douglas*.

While thro' the stillness scatters wild dismay,
Her babe's small cry, that leads him to his prey.
  Now, passing Urseren's open vale serene,
Her quiet streams, and hills of downy green,
Plunge with the Russ embrown'd by Terror's breath,
Where danger roofs the narrow walks of death;
By floods, that, thundering from their dizzy height,
Swell more gigantic on the stedfast sight;
Black drizzling craggs, that beaten by the din,
Vibrate, as if a voice complain'd within;
Bare steeps, where Desolation stalks, afraid,
Unstedfast, by a blasted yew upstay'd;
By * cells whose image, trembling as he prays,
Awe-struck, the kneeling peasant scarce surveys;
Loose-hanging rocks the Day's bless'd eye that hide,
And † crosses rear'd to Death on every side,
Which with cold kiss Devotion planted near,
And, bending, water'd with the human tear,
Soon fading "silent" from her upward eye,
Unmov'd with each rude form of Danger nigh,
Fix'd on the anchor left by him who saves
Alike in whelming snows and roaring waves.
  On as we move, a softer prospect opes,
Calm huts, and lawns between, and sylvan slopes.
While mists, suspended on th' expiring gale,
Moveless o'er-hang the deep secluded vale,
The beams of evening, slipping soft between,
Light up of tranquil joy a sober scene;
Winding it's dark-green wood and emerald glade,
The still vale lengthens underneath the shade;
While in soft gloom the scattering bowers recede,
Green dewy lights adorn the freshen'd mead,
Where solitary forms illumin'd stray
Turning with quiet touch the valley's hay,
On the low ‡ brown wood-huts delighted sleep
Along the brighten'd gloom reposing deep.
While pastoral pipes and streams the landscape lull,
And bells of passing mules that tinkle dull,

* The Catholic religion prevails here, these cells are, as is well known, very common in the Catholic countries, planted, like the Roman tombs, along the road side.

† Crosses commemorative of the deaths of travellers by the fall of snow and other accidents very common along this dreadful road.

‡ The houses in the more retired Swiss valleys are all built of wood.

In solemn shapes before th' admiring eye
Dilated hang the misty pines on high,
Huge convent domes with pinnacles and tow'rs,
And antique castles seen thro' drizzling show'rs.
  From such romantic dreams my soul awake,
Lo! Fear looks silent down on Uri's lake,
By whose unpathway'd margin still and dread
Was never heard the plodding peasant's tread.
Tower like a wall the naked rocks, or reach
Far o'er the secret water dark with beech,
More high, to where creation seems to end,
Shade above shade the desert pines ascend,
And still, below, where mid the savage scene
Peeps out a little speck of smiling green,
There with his infants man undaunted creeps
And hangs his small wood-hut upon the steeps.
A garden-plot the desert air perfumes,
Mid the dark pines a little orchard blooms,
A zig-zag path from the domestic skiff
Threading the painful cragg surmounts the cliff.
—Before those hermit doors, that never know
The face of traveller passing to and fro,
No peasant leans upon his pole, to tell
For whom at morning toll'd the funeral bell,
Their watch-dog ne'er his angry bark forgoes,
Touch'd by the beggar's moan of human woes,
The grassy seat beneath their casement shade
The pilgrim's wistful eye hath never stay'd.
—There, did the iron Genius not disdain
The gentle Power that haunts the myrtle plain,
There might the love-sick maiden sit, and chide
Th' insuperable rocks and severing tide,
There watch at eve her lover's sun-gilt sail
Approaching, and upbraid the tardy gale,
There list at midnight till is heard no more,
Below, the echo of his parting oar,
There hang in fear, when growls the frozen stream,
To guide his dangerous tread the taper's gleam.

  Mid stormy vapours ever driving by,
Where ospreys, cormorants, and herons cry,
Where hardly giv'n the hopeless waste to chear,
Deny'd the bread of life the foodful ear,
Dwindles the pear on autumn's latest spray,

And apple sickens pale in summer's ray,
Ev'n here Content has fix'd her smiling reign
With Independance child of high Disdain.
Exulting mid the winter of the skies,
Shy as the jealous chamois, Freedom flies,
And often grasps her sword, and often eyes,
Her crest a bough of Winter's bleakest pine,
Strange "weeds" and alpine plants her helm entwine,
And wildly-pausing oft she hangs aghast,
While thrills the "Spartan fife" between the blast.
'Tis storm; and hid in mist from hour to hour
All day the floods a deeper murmur pour,
And mournful sounds, as of a Spirit lost,
Pipe wild along the hollow-blustering coast,
'Till the Sun walking on his western field
Shakes from behind the clouds his flashing shield.
Triumphant on the bosom of the storm,
Glances the fire-clad eagle's wheeling form;
Eastward, in long perspective glittering, shine
The wood-crown'd cliffs that o'er the lake recline;
Wide o'er the Alps a hundred streams unfold,
At once to pillars turn'd that flame with gold;
Behind his sail the peasant strives to shun
The west that burns like one dilated sun,
Where in a mighty crucible expire
The mountains, glowing hot, like coals of fire.*
But lo! the boatman, over-aw'd, before
The pictur'd fane of Tell suspends his oar;
Confused the Marathonian tale appears,
While burn in his full eyes the glorious tears.
And who but feels a power of strong controul,
Felt only there, oppress his labouring soul,
Who walks, where honour'd men of ancient days

* I had once given to these sketches the title of Picturesque; but the Alps are insulted in applying to them that term. Whoever, in attempting to describe their sublime features, should confine himself to the cold rules of painting would give his reader but a very imperfect idea of those emotions which they have the irresistible power of communicating to the most impassive imaginations. The fact is, that controuling influence, which distinguishes the Alps from all other scenery, is derived from images which disdain the pencil. Had I wished to make a picture of this scene I had thrown much less light into it. But I consulted nature and my feelings. The ideas excited by the stormy sunset I am here describing owed their sublimity to that deluge of light, or rather of fire, in which nature had wrapped the immense forms around me; any intrusion of shade, by destroying the unity of the impression, had necessarily diminished it's grandeur.

Have wrought with god-like arm the deeds of praise?
Say, who, by thinking on Canadian hills,
Or wild Aosta lull'd by Alpine rills,
On Zutphen's plain; or where with soften'd gaze
The old grey stones the plaided chief surveys,
Can guess the high resolve, the cherish'd pain
Of him whom passion rivets to the plain,
Where breath'd the gale that caught Wolfe's happiest sigh,
And the last sun-beam fell on Bayard's eye,
Where bleeding Sydney from the cup retir'd,
And glad Dundee in "faint huzzas" expir'd.
  But now with other soul I stand alone
Sublime upon this far-surveying cone,
And watch from * pike to pike amid the sky
Small as a bird the chamois-chaser fly.
'Tis his with fearless step at large to roam
Thro' wastes, of Spirits wing'd the solemn home,
†Thro' vacant worlds where Nature never gave
A brook to murmur or a bough to wave,
Which unsubstantial Phantoms sacred keep;
Thro' worlds where Life and Sound, and Motion sleep,
Where Silence still her death-like reign extends,
Save when the startling cliff unfrequent rends:
In the deep snow the mighty ruin drown'd,
Mocks the dull ear of Time with deaf abortive sound;
—To mark a planet's pomp and steady light
In the least star of scarce-appearing night,
And neighbouring moon, that coasts the vast profound,
Wheel pale and silent her diminish'd round,
While far and wide the icy summits blaze
Rejoicing in the glory of her rays;
The star of noon that glitters small and bright,
Shorn of his beams, insufferably white,
And flying fleet behind his orb to view
Th' interminable sea of sable blue.
—Of cloudless suns no more ye frost-built spires
Refract in rainbow hues the restless fires!
Ye dewy mists the arid rocks o'er-spread
Whose slippery face derides his deathful tread!

* Pike is a word very commonly used in the north of England, to signify a high mountain of the conic form, as Langdale pike, etc.

† For most of the images in the next sixteen verses I am indebted to M. Raymond's interesting observations annexed to his translation of Coxe's *Tour in Switzerland.*

—To wet the peak's impracticable sides
He opens of his feet the sanguine tides,
Weak and more weak the issuing current eyes
Lapp'd by the panting tongue of thirsty skies.*
—At once bewildering mists around him close,
And cold and hunger are his least of woes;
The Demon of the snow with angry roar
Descending, shuts for aye his prison door.
Craz'd by the strength of hope at morn he eyes
As sent from heav'n the raven of the skies,
Then with despair's whole weight his spirits sink,
No bread to feed him, and the snow his drink,
While ere his eyes can close upon the day,
The eagle of the Alps o'ershades his prey.
—Meanwhile his wife and child with cruel hope
All night the door at every moment ope;
Haply that child in fearful doubt may gaze,
Passing his father's bones in future days,
Start at the reliques of that very thigh,
On which so oft he prattled when a boy.
  Hence shall we turn where, heard with fear afar,
Thunders thro' echoing pines the headlong Aar?
Or rather stay to taste the mild delights
Of pensive † Underwalden's pastoral heights?
  —Is there who mid these awful wilds has seen
The native Genii walk the mountain green?
Or heard, while other worlds their charms reveal,
Soft music from th' aëreal summit steal?
While o'er the desert, answering every close,
Rich steam of sweetest perfume comes and goes.
—And sure there is a secret Power that reigns
Here, where no trace of man the spot profanes,
Nought but the herds that pasturing upward creep,
Hung dim-discover'd from the dangerous steep,
‡ Or summer hamlet, flat and bare, on high
Suspended, mid the quiet of the sky.

* The rays of the sun drying the rocks frequently produce on their surface a dust so subtile and slippery, that the wretched chamois-chasers are obliged to bleed themselves in the legs and feet in order to secure a footing.

† The people of this Canton are supposed to be of a more melancholy disposition than the other inhabitants of the Alps: this, if true, may proceed from their living more secluded.

‡ These summer hamlets are most probably (as I have seen observed by a critic in the *Gentleman's Magazine*) what Virgil alludes to in the expression "Castella in tumulis."

How still! no irreligious sound or sight
Rouzes the soul from her severe delight.
An idle voice the sabbath region fills
Of Deep that calls to Deep across the hills,
Broke only by the melancholy sound
Of drowsy bells for ever tinkling round;
Faint wail of eagle melting into blue
Beneath the cliffs, and pine-woods steady sugh; *
The solitary heifer's deepen'd low;
Or rumbling heard remote of falling snow.
Save that, the stranger seen below, the boy
Shouts from the echoing hills with savage joy.
When warm from myrtle bays and tranquil seas,
Comes on, to whisper hope, the † vernal breeze,
When hums the mountain bee in May's glad ear,
And emerald isles to spot the heights appear,
When shouts and lowing herds the valley fill,
And louder torrents stun the noon-tide hill,
When fragrant scents beneath th' enchanted tread
Spring up, his little all around him spread,
The pastoral Swiss begins the cliffs to scale
To silence leaving the deserted vale,
Up the green mountain tracking Summer's feet,
Each twilight earlier call'd the Sun to meet,
With earlier smile the ray of morn to view
Fall on his shifting hut that gleams mid smoking dew;
Bless'd with his herds, as in the patriarch's age,
The summer long to feed from stage to stage;
O'er azure pikes serene and still, they go,
And hear the rattling thunder far below;
Or lost at eve in sudden mist the day
Attend, or dare with minute-steps their way;
Hang from the rocks that tremble o'er the steep,
And tempt the icy valley yawning deep,
O'er-walk the chasmy torrent's foam-lit bed,
Rock'd on the dizzy larch's narrow tread,
Whence Danger leans, and pointing ghastly, joys
To mock the mind with "desperation's toys";
Or steal beneath loose mountains, half deterr'd,

* Sugh, a Scotch word expressive of the sound of the wind through the trees.

† This wind, which announces the spring to the Swiss, is called in their language Foen; and is according to M. Raymond the Syroco of the Italians.

That sigh and shudder to the lowing herd.
—I see him, up the midway cliff he creeps
To where a scanty knot of verdure peeps,
Thence down the steep a pile of grass he throws
The fodder of his herds in winter snows.
Far different life to what tradition hoar
Transmits of days more bless'd in times of yore.*
Then Summer lengthen'd out his season bland,
And with rock-honey flow'd the happy land.
Continual fountains welling chear'd the waste,
And plants were wholesome, now of deadly taste.
Nor Winter yet his frozen stores had pil'd
Usurping where the fairest herbage smil'd;
Nor Hunger forc'd the herds from pastures bare
For scanty food the treacherous cliffs to dare.
Then the milk-thistle bad those herds demand
Three times a day the pail and welcome hand.
But human vices have provok'd the rod
Of angry Nature to avenge her God.
Thus does the father to his sons relate,
On the lone mountain top, their chang'd estate.
Still, Nature, ever just, to him imparts
Joys only given to uncorrupted hearts.
—'Tis morn: with gold the verdant mountain glows,
More high, the snowy peaks with hues of rose.
Far stretch'd beneath the many-tinted hills
A mighty waste of mist the valley fills,
A solemn sea! whose vales and mountains round
Stand motionless, to awful silence bound.
A gulf of gloomy blue, that opens wide
And bottomless, divides the midway tide.
Like leaning masts of stranded ships appear
The pines that near the coast their summits rear;
Of cabins, woods, and lawns a pleasant shore
Bounds calm and clear the chaos still and hoar;
Loud thro' that midway gulf ascending, sound

* This tradition of the golden age of the Alps, as M. Raymond observes, is highly interesting, interesting not less to the philosopher than to the poet. Here I cannot help remarking, that the superstitions of the Alps appear to be far from possessing that poetical character which so eminently distinguishes those of Scotland and the other mountainous northern countries. The Devil with his horns, etc., seems to be in their idea, the principal agent that brings about the sublime natural revolutions that take place daily before their eyes.

Unnumber'd streams with hollow roar profound.
Mounts thro' the nearer mist the chaunt of birds,
And talking voices, and the low of herds,
The bark of dogs, the drowsy tinkling bell,
And wild-wood mountain lutes of saddest swell.
Think not, suspended from the cliff on high
He looks below with undelighted eye.
—No vulgar joy is his, at even tide
Stretch'd on the scented mountain's purple side.
For as the pleasures of his simple day
Beyond his native valley hardly stray,
Nought round it's darling precincts can he find
But brings some past enjoyment to his mind,
While Hope that ceaseless leans on Pleasure's urn
Binds her wild wreathes, and whispers his return.
Once Man entirely free, alone and wild,
Was bless'd as free—for he was Nature's child.
He, all superior but his God disdain'd,
Walk'd none restraining, and by none restrain'd,
Confess'd no law but what his reason taught,
Did all he wish'd, and wish'd but what he ought.
As Man in his primæval dower array'd
The image of his glorious sire display'd,
Ev'n so, by vestal Nature guarded, here
The traces of primæval Man appear.
The native dignity no forms debase,
The eye sublime, and surly lion-grace.
The slave of none, of beasts alone the lord,
He marches with his flute, his book, and sword,
Well taught by that to feel his rights, prepar'd
With this "the blessings he enjoys to guard."
And as on glorious ground he draws his breath,
Where Freedom oft, with Victory and Death,
Hath seen in grim array amid their Storms
Mix'd with auxiliar Rocks, three * hundred Forms;
While twice ten thousand corselets at the view

* Alluding to several battles which the Swiss in very small numbers have gained over their oppressors the house of Austria; and in particular, to one fought at Naeffels near Glarus, where three hundred and thirty men defeated an army of between fifteen and twenty thousand Austrians. Scattered over the valley are to be found eleven stones, with this inscription, 1388, the year the battle was fought, marking out as I was told upon the spot, the several places where the Austrians attempting to make a stand were repulsed anew.

Dropp'd loud at once, Oppression shriek'd, and flew.
Oft as those sainted Rocks before him spread,
An unknown power connects him with the dead.
For images of other worlds are there,
Awful the light, and holy is the air.
Uncertain thro' his fierce uncultur'd soul
Like lighted tempests troubled transports roll;
To viewless realms his Spirit towers amain,
Beyond the senses and their little reign.
  And oft, when pass'd that solemn vision by,
He holds with God himself communion high,
When the dread peal of swelling torrents fills
The sky-roof'd temple of th' eternal hills,
And savage Nature humbly joins the rite,
While flash her upward eyes severe delight.
Or gazing from the mountain's silent brow,
Bright stars of ice and azure worlds of snow,
Where needle peaks of granite shooting bare
Tremble in ever-varying tints of air,
Great joy by horror tam'd dilates his heart,
And the near heav'ns their own delights impart.
—When the Sun bids the gorgeous scene farewell,
Alps overlooking Alps their state upswell;
Huge Pikes of Darkness nam'd, of * Fear and Storms
Lift, all serene, their still, illumin'd forms,
In sea-like reach of prospect round him spread,
Ting'd like an angel's smile all rosy red.
  When downward to his winter hut he goes,
Dear and more dear the lessening circle grows,
That hut which from the hills his eyes employs
So oft, the central point of all his joys.
And as a swift by tender cares oppress'd
Peeps often ere she dart into her nest,
So to th' untrodden floor, where round him looks
His father helpless as the babe he rocks,
Oft he descends to nurse the brother pair,
Till storm and driving ice blockade him there;
There hears, protected by the woods behind,
Secure, the chiding of the baffled wind,
Hears Winter, calling all his Terrors round,
Rush down the living rocks with whirlwind sound.

* As Schreck-Horn, the pike of terror. Wetter-Horn, the pike of storms, etc. etc.

Thro' Nature's vale his homely pleasures glide
Unstain'd by envy, discontent, and pride,
The bound of all his vanity to deck
With one bright bell a favourite heifer's neck ;
Content upon some simple annual feast,
Remember'd half the year, and hop'd the rest,
If dairy produce, from his inner hoard,
Of thrice ten summers consecrate the board.
—Alas ! in every clime a flying ray
Is all we have to chear our wintry way,
Condemn'd, in mists and tempests ever rife,
To pant slow up the endless Alp of life.
"Here," cried a swain, whose venerable head
Bloom'd with the snow-drops of Man's narrow bed,
Last night, while by his dying fire, as clos'd
The day, in luxury my limbs repos'd,
"Here Penury oft from misery's mount will guide
Ev'n to the summer door his icy tide,
And here the avalanche of Death destroy
The little cottage of domestic Joy.
But, ah ! th' unwilling mind may more than trace
The general sorrows of the human race :
The churlish gales, that unremitting blow
Cold from necessity's continual snow,
To us the gentle groups of bliss deny
That on the noon-day bank of leisure lie.
Yet more ; the tyrant Genius, still at strife
With all the tender Charities of life,
When close and closer they begin to strain,
No fond hand left to staunch th' unclosing vein,
Tearing their bleeding ties leaves Age to groan
On his wet bed, abandon'd and alone.
For ever, fast as they of strength become
To pay the filial debt, for food to roam,
The father, forc'd by Powers that only deign
That solitary Man disturb their reign,
From his bare nest amid the storms of heaven
Drives, eagle-like, his sons as he was driven,
His last dread pleasure ! watches to the plain—
And never, eagle-like, beholds again."
  When the poor heart has all its joys resign'd,
Why does their sad remembrance cleave behind ?
Lo ! by the lazy Seine the exile roves,

Or where thick sails illume Batavia's groves;
Soft o'er the waters mournful measures swell,
Unlocking bleeding Thought's "memorial cell";
At once upon his heart Despair has set
Her seal, the mortal tear his cheek has wet;
Strong poison not a form of steel can brave
Bows his young hairs with sorrow to the grave.
  Gay lark of hope thy silent song resume!
Fair smiling lights the purpled hills illume!
Soft gales and dews of life's delicious morn,
And thou, lost fragrance of the heart return!
†Soon flies the little joy to man allow'd,
And tears before him travel like a cloud.
For come Diseases on, and Penury's rage,
Labour, and Pain, and Grief, and joyless Age,
And Conscience dogging close his bleeding way
Cries out, and leads her Spectres to their prey,
'Till Hope-deserted, long in vain his breath
Implores the dreadful untried sleep of Death.
—Mid savage rocks and seas of snow that shine
Between interminable tracts of pine,
Round a lone fane the human Genii mourn,
Where fierce the rays of woe collected burn.
—From viewless lamps a ghastly dimness falls,
And ebbs uncertain on the troubled walls,
Dim dreadful faces thro' the gloom appear,
Abortive Joy, and Hope that works in fear,
While strives a secret Power to hush the crowd,
Pain's wild rebellious burst proclaims her rights aloud.
  Oh give not me that eye of hard disdain
That views undimm'd Einsiedlen's ‡ wretched fane.
Mid muttering prayers all sounds of torment meet,
Dire clap of hands, distracted chafe of feet,
While loud and dull ascends the weeping cry,
Surely in other thoughts contempt may die.
If the sad grave of human ignorance bear
One flower of hope—Oh pass and leave it there.

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* The effect of the famous air called in French Ranz des Vaches upon the Swiss troops removed from their native country is well known, as also the injunction of not playing it on pain of death, before the regiments of that nation, in the service of France and Holland.

† Optima quæque dies, etc.

‡ This shrine is resorted to, from a hope of relief, by multitudes, from every corner of the Catholick world, labouring under mental or bodily afflictions.

—The tall Sun, tiptoe on an Alpine spire,
Flings o'er the desert blood-red streams of fire.
At such an hour there are who love to stray,
And meet the gladdening pilgrims on their way.
—Now with joy's tearful kiss each other greet,
Nor longer naked be your way-worn feet,
For ye have reach'd at last that happy shore,
Where the charm'd worm of pain shall gnaw no more.
How gayly murmur and how sweetly taste
The * fountains rear'd for you amid the waste !
Yes I will see you when ye first behold
Those turrets tipp'd by hope with morning gold,
And watch, while on your brows the cross ye make,
Round your pale eyes a wintry lustre wake.
—Without one hope her written griefs to blot,
Save in the land where all things are forgot,
My heart, alive to transports long unknown,
Half wishes your delusion were it's own.
Last let us turn to where Chamouny † shields,
Bosom'd in gloomy woods, her golden fields,
Five streams of ice amid her cots descend,
And with wild flowers and blooming orchards blend,
A scene more fair than what the Grecian feigns
Of purple lights and ever vernal plains.
Here lawns and shades by breezy rivulets fann'd,
Here all the Seasons revel hand in hand.
—Red stream the cottage lights ; the landscape fades,
Erroneous wavering mid the twilight shades.
Alone ascends that mountain nam'd of white,‡
That dallies with the Sun the summer night.
Six thousand years amid his lonely bounds
The voice of Ruin, day and night, resounds.
Where Horror-led his sea of ice assails,
Havoc and Chaos blast a thousand vales,
In waves, like two enormous serpents, wind
And drag their length of deluge train behind.
Between the pines enormous boughs descry'd

* Rude fountains built and covered with sheds for the accommodation of the pilgrims, in their ascent of the mountain. Under these sheds the sentimental traveller and the philosopher may find interesting sources of meditation.

† This word is pronounced upon the spot Chàmouny, I have taken the liberty of reading it long thinking it more musical.

‡ It is only from the higher part of the valley of Chàmouny that Mont Blanc is visible.

Serene he towers, in deepest purple dy'd ;
Glad Day-light laughs upon his top of snow,
Glitter the stars above, and all is black below.
  At such an hour I heav'd the human sigh,
When roar'd the sullen Arve in anger by,
That not for thee, delicious vale ! unfold
Thy reddening orchards, and thy fields of gold ;
That thou, the * slave of slaves, art doom'd to pine,
While no Italian arts their charms combine
To teach the skirt of thy dark cloud to shine ;
For thy poor babes that, hurrying from the door,
With pale-blue hands, and eyes that fix'd implore,
Dead muttering lips, and hair of hungry white,
Besiege the traveller whom they half affright.
—Yes, were it mine, the cottage meal to share
Forc'd from my native mountains bleak and bare ;
O'er † Anet's hopeless seas of marsh to stray,
Her shrill winds roaring round my lonely way ;
To scent the sweets of Piedmont's breathing rose,
And orange gale that o'er Lugano blows ;
In the wide range of many a weary round,
Still have my pilgrim feet unfailing found,
As despot courts their blaze of gems display,
Ev'n by the secret cottage far away
The lilly of domestic joy decay ;
While Freedom's farthest hamlets blessings share,
Found still beneath her smile, and only there.
The casement shade more luscious woodbine binds,
And to the door a neater pathway winds,
At early morn the careful housewife, led
To cull her dinner from it's garden bed,
Of weedless herbs a healthier prospect sees,
While hum with busier joy her happy bees ;
In brighter rows her table wealth aspires,
And laugh with merrier blaze her evening fires ;
Her infant's cheeks with fresher roses glow,
And wilder graces sport around their brow ;
By clearer taper lit a cleanlier board
Receives at supper hour her tempting hoard ;
The chamber hearth with fresher boughs is spread,
And whiter is the hospitable bed.

* It is scarce necessary to observe that these lines were written before the emancipation of Savoy.

† A vast extent of marsh so called near the lake of Neuf-chatel.

—And thou! fair favoured region! which my soul
Shall love, till Life has broke her golden bowl,
Till Death's cold touch her cistern-wheel assail,
And vain regret and vain desire shall fail;
Tho' now, where erst the grey-clad peasant stray'd,
To break the quiet of the village shade
Gleam war's * discordant habits thro' the trees,
And the red banner mock the sullen breeze;
'Tho' now no more thy maids their voices suit
To the low-warbled breath of twilight lute,
And heard, the pausing village hum between,
No solemn songstress lull the fading green,
Scared by the fife, and rumbling drum's alarms,
And the short thunder, and the flash of arms;
While, as Night bids the startling uproar die,
Sole sound, the † sourd renews his mournful cry:
—Yet, hast thou found that Freedom spreads her pow'r
Beyond the cottage hearth, the cottage door:
All nature smiles; and owns beneath her eyes
Her fields peculiar, and peculiar skies.
Yes, as I roam'd where Loiret's ‡ waters glide
Thro' rustling aspins heard from side to side,
When from october clouds a milder light
Fell, where the blue flood rippled into white,
Methought from every cot the watchful bird

* This, as may be supposed, was written before France became the seat of war.

† An insect so called, which emits a short, melancholy cry, heard, at the close of the summer evenings, on the banks of the Loire.

‡ The river Loiret, which has the honour of giving name to a department, rises out of the earth at a place, called La Source, a league and a half south-east of Orleans, and taking at once the character of a considerable stream, winds under a most delicious bank on its left, with a flat country of meadows, woods, and vineyards on its right, till it falls into the Loire about three or four leagues below Orleans. The hand of false taste has committed on its banks those outrages which the Abbé de Lille so pathetically deprecates in those charming verses descriptive of the Seine, visiting in secret the retreat of his friend Watelet. Much as the Loiret, in its short course, suffers from injudicious ornament, yet are there spots to be found upon its banks as soothing as meditation could wish for: the curious traveller may meet with some of them where it loses itself among the mills in the neighbourhood of the villa called La Fontaine. The walks of La Source, where it takes its rise, may, in the eyes of some people, derive an additional interest from the recollection that they were the retreat of Bolingbroke during his exile, and that here it was that his philosophical works were chiefly composed. The inscriptions, of which he speaks in one of his letters to Swift descriptive of this spot, are not, I believe, now extant. The gardens have been modelled within these twenty years according to a plan evidently not dictated by the taste of the friend of Pope.

Crowed with ear-piercing power 'till then unheard ;
Each clacking mill, that broke the murmuring streams,
Rock'd the charm'd thought in more delightful dreams ;
Chasing those long long dreams the falling leaf
Awoke a fainter pang of moral grief ;
The measured echo of the distant flail
Winded in sweeter cadence down the vale ;
A more majestic tide the * water roll'd,
And glowed the sun-gilt groves in richer gold :
  —Tho' Liberty shall soon, indignant, raise
Red on his hills his beacon's comet blaze ;
Bid from on high his lonely cannon sound,
And on ten thousand hearths his shout rebound ;
His larum-bell from village-tow'r to tow'r
Swing on th' astounded ear it's dull undying roar :
Yet, yet rejoice, tho' Pride's perverted ire
Rouze Hell's own aid, and wrap thy hills in fire.
Lo ! from th' innocuous flames, a lovely birth !
With it's own Virtues springs another earth :
Nature, as in her prime, her virgin reign
Begins, and Love and Truth compose her train ;
With pulseless hand, and fix'd unwearied gaze,
Unbreathing Justice her still beam surveys :
No more, along thy vales and viny groves,
Whole hamlets disappearing as he moves,
With cheeks o'erspread by smiles of baleful glow,
On his pale horse shall fell Consumption go.
  Oh give, great God, to Freedom's waves to ride
Sublime o'er Conquest, Avarice, and Pride,
To break, the vales where Death with Famine scow'rs,
And dark Oppression builds her thick-ribb'd tow'rs ;
Where Machination her fell soul resigns,
Fled panting to the centre of her mines ;
Where Persecution decks with ghastly smiles
Her bed, his mountains mad Ambition piles ;
Where Discord stalks dilating, every hour,
And crouching fearful at the feet of Pow'r,
Like Lightnings eager for th' almighty word,
Look up for sign of havoc, Fire, and Sword ; †

* The duties upon many parts of the French rivers were so exorbitant that the poorer people, deprived of the benefit of water carriage, were obliged to transport their goods by land.

† —— And, at his heels,
Leash'd in like hounds, should Famine, Sword, and Fire,
Crouch for employment.

—Give them, beneath their breast while Gladness springs,
To brood the nations o'er with Nile-like wings;
And grant that every sceptred child of clay,
Who cries, presumptuous, "here their tides shall stay,"
Swept in their anger from th' affrighted shore,
With all his creatures sink—to rise no more.
To-night, my friend, within this humble cot
Be the dead load of mortal ills forgot,
Renewing, when the rosy summits glow
At morn, our various journey, sad and slow.

II

The following is Wordsworth's Itinerary of the Tour, taken by him and his friend Jones, which gave rise to *Descriptive Sketches.*

July

13. Calais.
14. Ardres.
17. Péronne.
18. Village near Coucy.
19. Soissons.
20. Château Thierry.
21. Sézanne.
22. Village near Troyes.
23. Bar-le-Duc.
24. Chatillon-sur-Seine.
26. Nuits.
27. Châlons.
28. Châlons.
29. On the Saône.
30. Lyons.
31. Condrieu.

August

1. Moreau.
2. Voreppe.
3. Village near Chartreuse.
4. Chartreuse.
6. Aix.
7. Town in Savoy.
8. Town on Lake of Geneva.
9. Lausanne.

August

10. Villeneuve.
11. St. Maurice in the Valais.
12. Chamouny.
13. Chamouny.
14. Martigny.
15. Village beyond Sion.
16. Brieg.
17. Spital on Alps.
18. Margozza.
19. Village beyond Lago Maggiore.
20. Village on Lago di Como.
21. Village beyond Gravedona.
22. Jones at Chiavenna; W. W. at Samolaco.
23. Sovozza.
24. Splügen.
25. Flems.
26. Dissentis.
27. Village on the Reuss.
28. Fluelen.
29. Lucerne.
30. Village on the Lake of Zurich.
31. Einsiedlen.

September

1. Glarus.
2. Glarus.
3. Village beyond Lake of Wallenstadt.
4. Village on road to Appenzell.
5. Appenzell.
6. Keswill, on Lake of Constance.
7. On the Rhine.
8. On the Rhine.
9. On road to Lucerne.
10. Lucerne.
11. Saxeln.
12. Village on the Aar.
13. Grindelwald.
14. Lauterbrunnen.

September

15. Village three leagues from Berne.
16. Avranches.
19. Village beyond Pierre Pertuises.
20. Village four leagues from Basle.
21. Basle.
22. Town six leagues from Strasburg.
23. Spires.
24. Village on Rhine.
25. Mentz. Mayence.
27. Village on Rhine, two leagues from Coblentz.
28. Cologne.
29. Village three leagues from Aix-la-Chapelle.

The pedestrians bought a boat at Basle, and in it floated down the Rhine as far as Cologne, intending to proceed in the same way to Ostend; but they returned to England from Cologne by Calais. In the course of this tour, Wordsworth wrote a letter to his sister, dated "Sept. 6, 1790, Keswill, a small village on the Lake of Constance," which will be found amongst his letters in a subsequent volume.—ED.

III

The following two variants in *Descriptive Sketches* are from MS. notes written in the late Lord Coleridge's copy of the edition of 1836-7.

l. 247.

Yet the world's business hither finds its way
At times, and unsought tales beguile the day,
And tender thoughts are those which Solitude

l. 249.

Yet tender thoughts dwell there. No Solitude
Hath power Youth's natural feelings to exclude.

IV

Anecdote for Fathers

See Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*, vi. 5.—κλεῖε βίην κάρτος τε λόγων ψευδηγόρα λέξω—which was Apollo's answer to certain persons who tried to force his oracle to reply.—ED.

V

The Thorn

William Taylor's translation of Bürger's *Pfarrer's Tochter* appeared in *The Monthly Magazine* (1796), and as the same volume contained contributions by Coleridge and Lamb, it is possible that Wordsworth saw it. Bürger's Pastor's Daughter murdered her natural child, but it is her ghost which haunts its grave, which she had torn

With bleeding nails beside the pond,
And nightly pines the pool beside.

VI

Simon Lee

It was found impossible fully to describe, within the limits of a footnote, the endless shiftings to and fro of the stanzas and half stanzas of *Simon Lee*. The first eight stanzas of the edition of 1798 are therefore reprinted in this Appendix; and a Table is added, by means of which the various transpositions effected from time to time may be readily ascertained. In the Table *a* stands for lines 1-4, and *b* for lines 5-8 of a stanza.

In the sweet shire of Cardigan,
Not far from pleasant Ivor-hall,
An old man dwells, a little man,
I've heard he once was tall.
Of years he has upon his back,
No doubt, a burthen weighty;
He says he is three score and ten,
But others say he's eighty.

A long blue livery-coat has he,
That's fair behind, and fair before;
Yet, meet him where you will, you see
At once that he is poor.
Full five and twenty years he lived
A running huntsman merry;
And, though he has but one eye left,
His cheek is like a cherry.

No man like him the horn could sound,
And no man was so full of glee;
To say the least, four counties round
Had heard of Simon Lee;
His master's dead, and no one now
Dwells in the hall of Ivor;
Men, dogs, and horses, all are dead;
He is the sole survivor.

His hunting feats have him bereft
Of his right eye, as you may see:
And then, what limbs those feats have left
To poor old Simon Lee!
He has no son, he has no child,
His wife, an aged woman,
Lives with him, near the waterfall,
Upon the village common.

And he is lean and he is sick,
His little body's half awry
His ancles they are swoln and thick;
His legs are thin and dry.
When he was young he little knew
Of husbandry or tillage;
And now he's forced to work, though weak,
—The weakest in the village.

He all the country could outrun,
Could leave both man and horse behind;
And often, ere the race was done,
He reeled and was stone-blind.
And still there's something in the world
At which his heart rejoices;
For when the chiming hounds are out,
He dearly loves their voices!

Old Ruth works out of doors with him,
And does what Simon cannot do;
For she, not over stout of limb,
Is stouter of the two.
And though you with your utmost skill
From labour could not wean them,
Alas! 'tis very little, all
Which they can do between them.

Beside their moss-grown hut of clay,
Not twenty paces from the door,
A scrap of land they have, but they
Are poorest of the poor.
This scrap of land he from the heath
Enclosed when he was stronger;
But what avails the land to them,
Which they can till no longer?

Editions 1798 and 1800.	Editions 1802-1815.	Edition 1820.	Edition 1827.	Editions 1832-1849.
1	1	1 *a* 2 *b*	1 *a* 2 *b*	1 *a* 2 *b*
2	2	3	4 *a* 3 *b*	3 *a* 5 *b*
3	3	4 *a* 5 *b*	3 *a* 5 *b*	6
4	6	6	6	4 *a* 3 *b*
5	4	5 *a* 4 *b*	5 *a* 4 *b*	5 *a* 4 *b*
6	5	7	8	8
7	7	8	7	7
8	8	9	9	9

VII

Lines written in Early Spring, ll. 11, 12

Compare the *Laws of Manu*, i. 49—"Vegetables, as well as animals, have internal consciousness, and are sensible of pleasure and pain." This I have received from a correspondent, but I have never seen the English version.—Ed.

VIII

An Evening Walk

(1) l. 219,

"His neck, a varying arch, between his towering wings."

Compare *Paradise Lost*, book vii. l. 438.

(2) l. 286, in the footnote reading of 1793, the line occurs

"Or clock, that blind against the wanderer borne."

This refers to the winged beetle, the buzzard-clock.

(3) l. 323, "The bird, etc." The owl. Compare Cowper's *Task*, i. ll. 205, 206.

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